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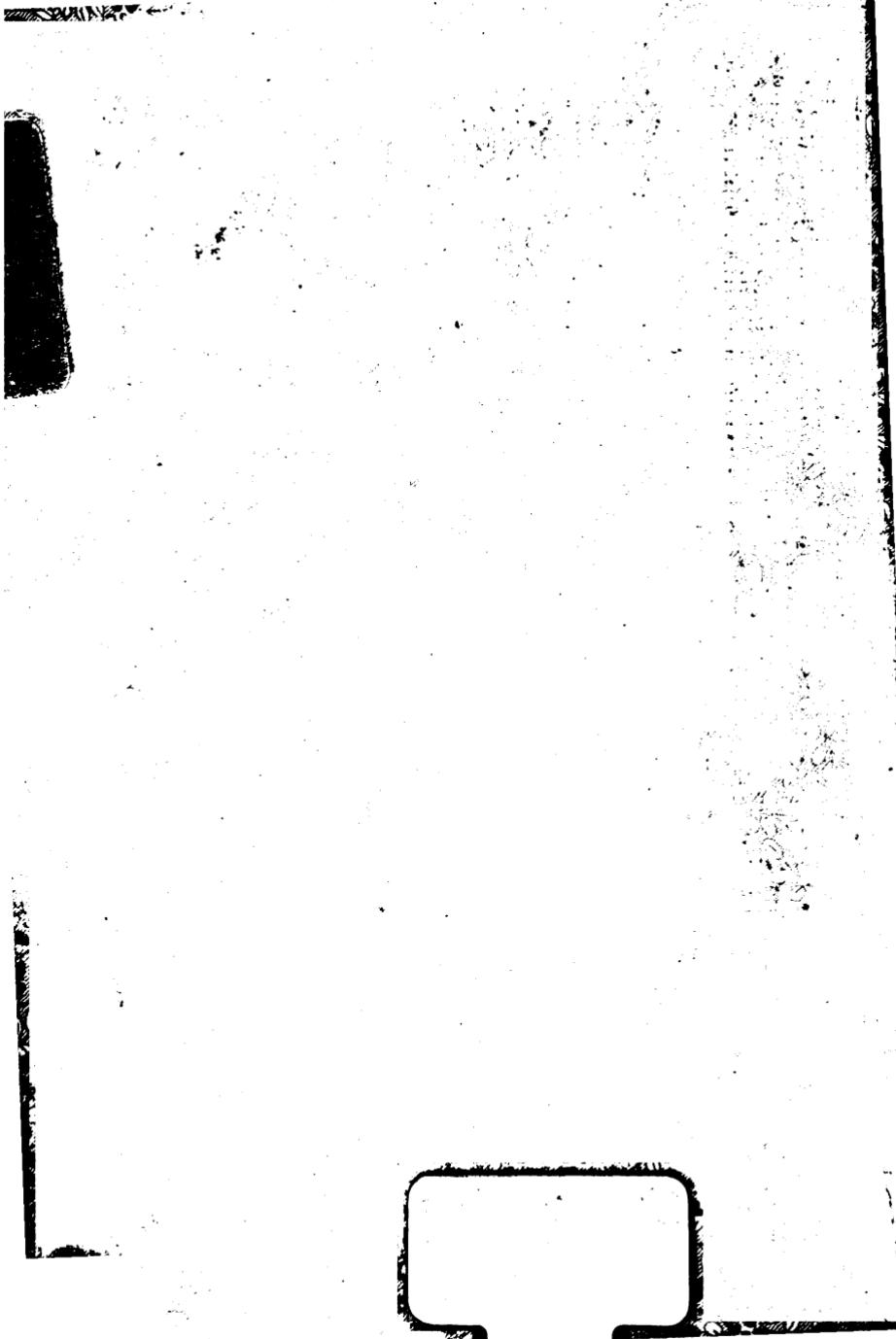
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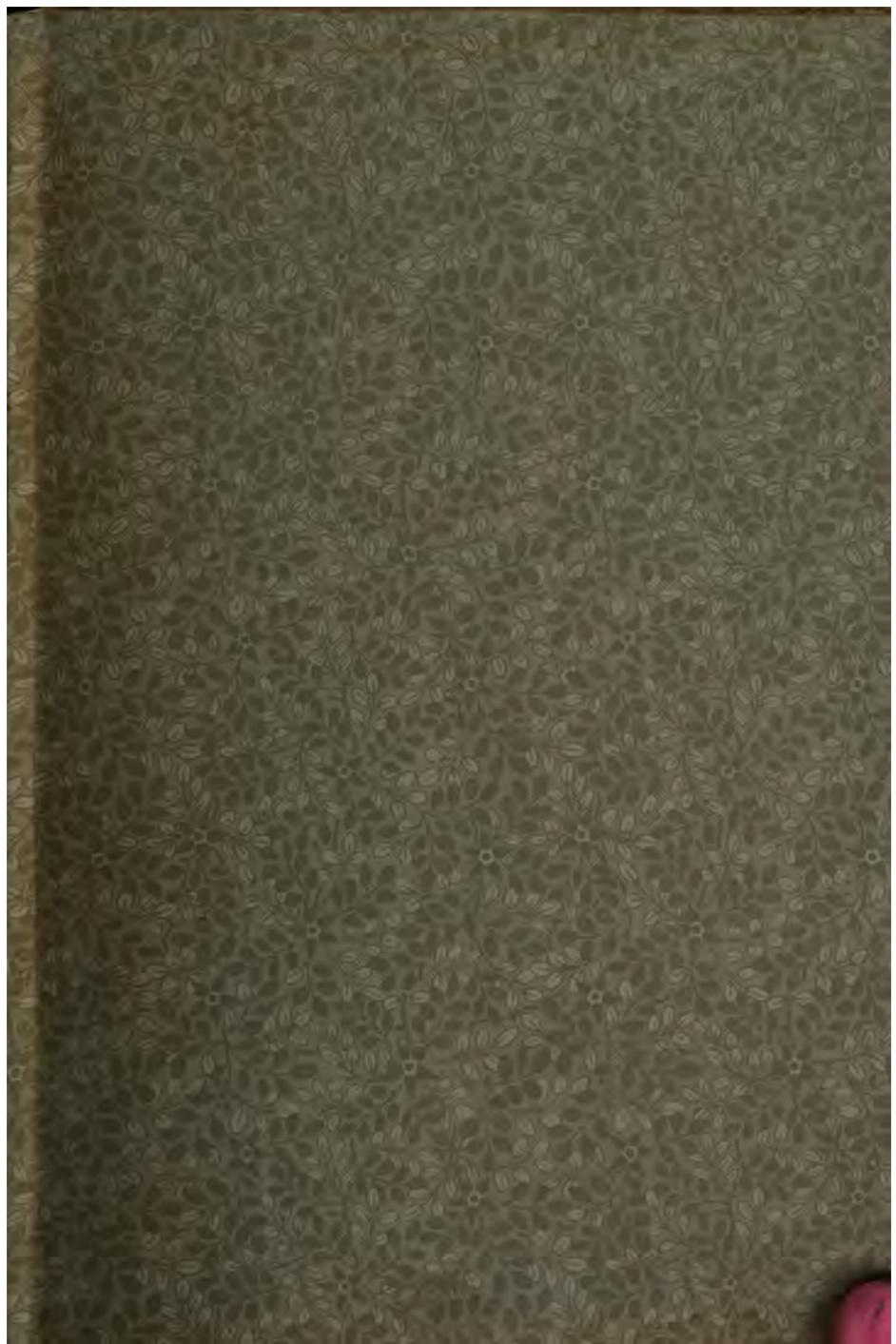
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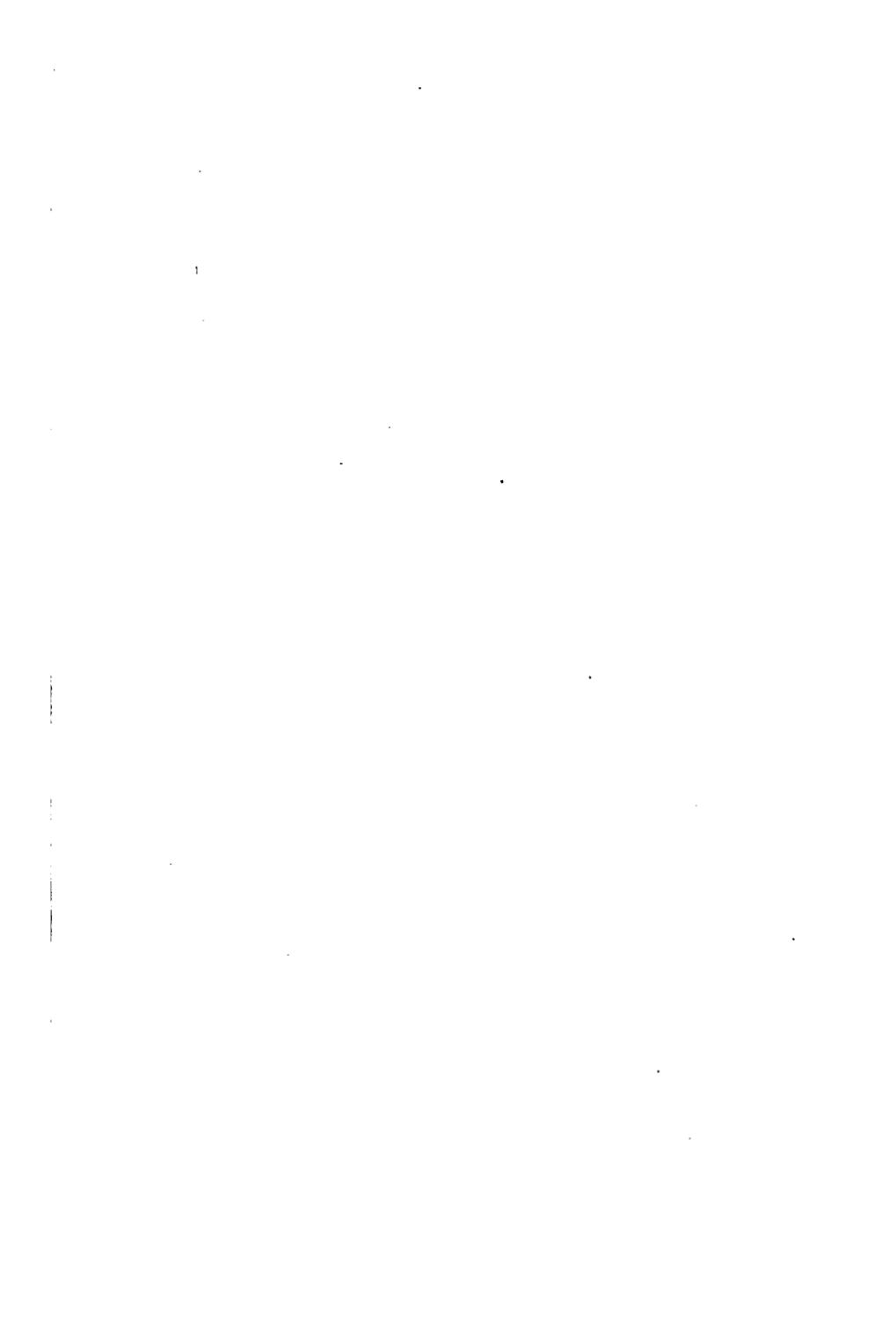
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COLLECTOR'S BUNGALOW, AT THE DANDAR, LANGAT.



THE CHERSONESE

WITH THE GILDING OFF.

BY
EMILY INNES.

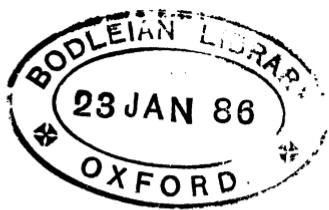
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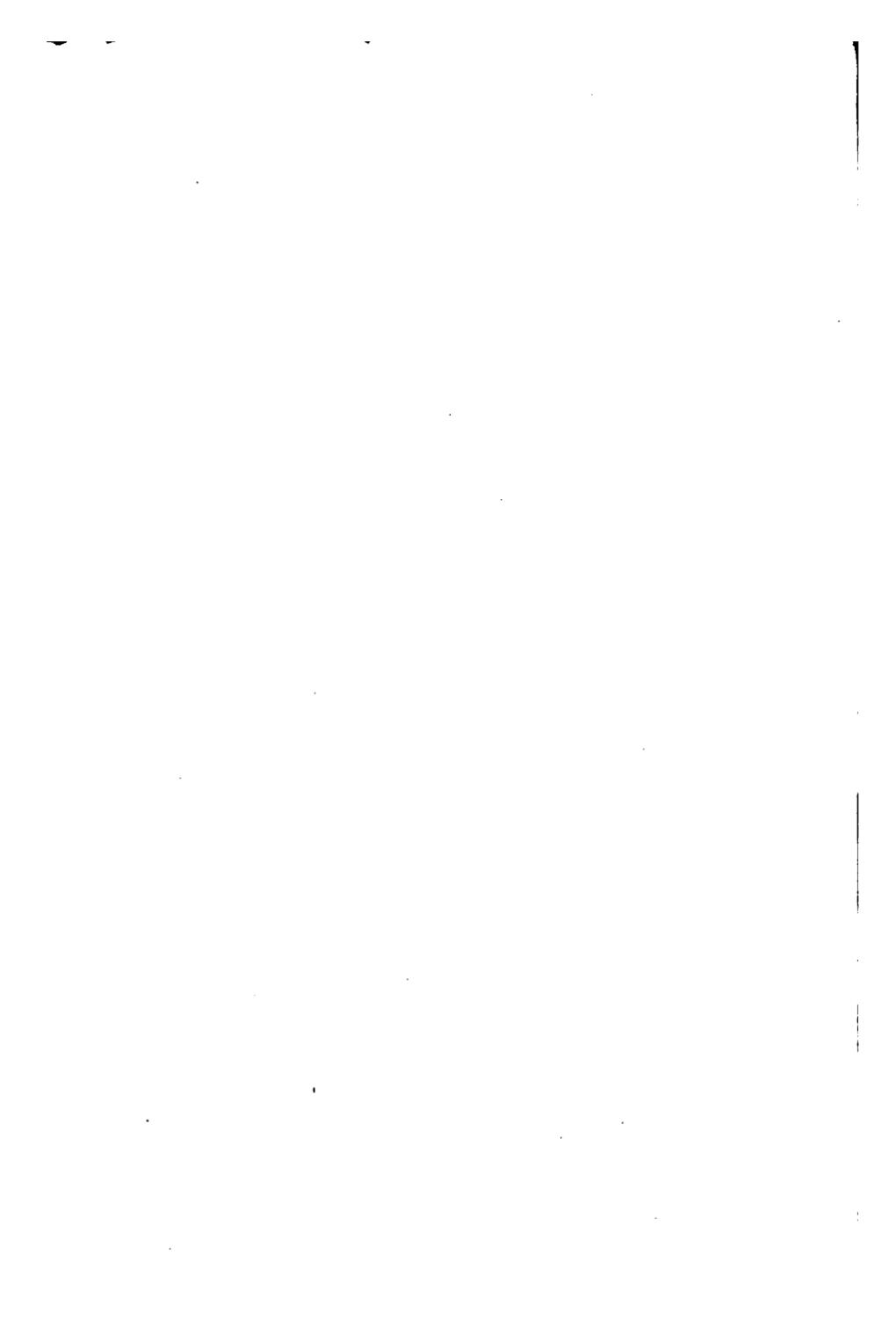
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THE CHERSONESE WITH THE GILDING OFF.

ERRATA.

Page 167, line 19, omit 'at that time.'

.. 214, " 20, for 'my cock' read 'any of them.'

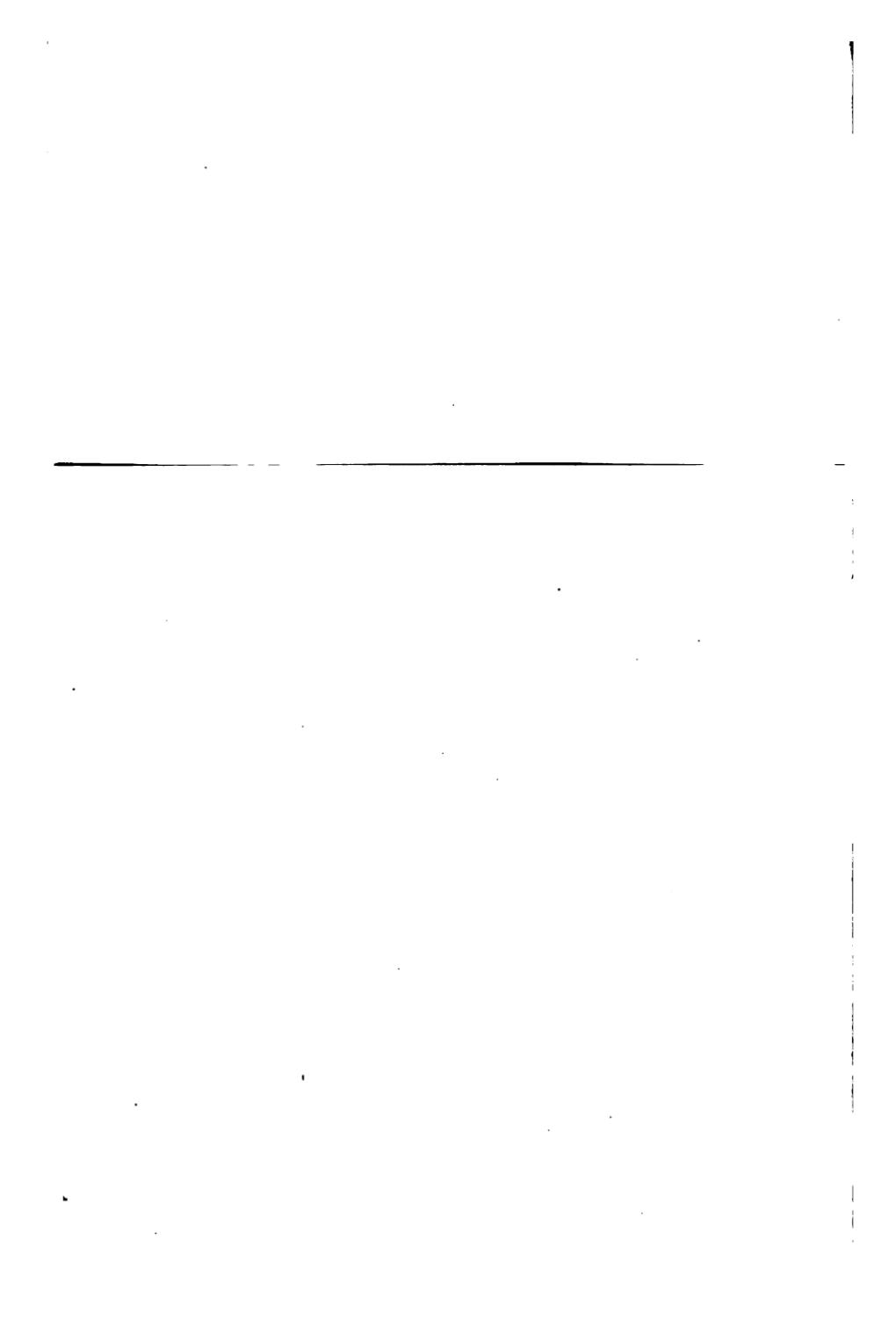
.. 215, " 1, for 'order the dinner' read 'speak to him.'

.. 225, " 7, for 'rumph' read 'rumpah.'

.. 248, " 21, for 'last three kinds' read 'last two kinda.'

James Innes, ex-treasurer of Sarawak.

so doing he particularly called attention to the fact—to which I beg likewise to call the reader's attention—that the collectorate he offered was the first in rank in the State



THE CHERONESE WITH THE GILDING OFF.

CHAPTER I.

LANGAT.

T was in May, 1876, that Sir William Jervois, then Governor of the Straits Settlements, offered the post of collector and magistrate at Langat, in the Malay native States, to Mr. James Innes, ex-treasurer of Sarawak. In so doing he particularly called attention to the fact—to which I beg likewise to call the reader's attention—that the collectorate he offered was the first in rank in the State

of Selangor, and as superior in position to the two others in the same State as it was in pay.

The two other collectorates were then held by half-castes, the pay of one being \$960 per annum, and that of the other \$1,800, while Mr. Innes was to receive \$2,400. The distinction between him and the inferior collectors was further marked by his being appointed a member of the Mixed State Council, an honour conferred on neither of them. He was next in rank to the Resident, and was to fill the latter's place should he be ill or absent.

The reason of this exaltation of Langat above the other collectorates was that the Sultan of Selangor lived there. The Sultan was the nominal ruler of the country, it being not yet annexed, but only 'protected' by England. He was the original cause of the British having entered it, for it was he

who had called in their assistance to keep him on his throne during some inter-tribal wars. It was Mr. Innes's duty to see that this old man did not get into mischief, and to warn him that Queen Victoria did not approve of piracy, slavery, pawnbroking, and other little failings to which he was addicted.

Immediately after the appointment had been accepted, our pleasure at entering what we fondly believed to be a branch of the English Government Service was dashed by a description of the place at which we should have to live, given us by an official in the Colonial Office, Singapore.

'It is perfectly impossible,' said this adviser to my husband, 'that Mrs. Innes can live at Langat; it is nothing but a mud-swamp, with one mud-path a quarter of a mile long between two padi-fields; the house is an attap (palm-leaf) one, with no

bath-room attached to it, the bathing-place being at some distance ; there is no garden, not a tree, no flowers, scarcely even any grass ; nothing to eat but "scavenger" fowls* and ducks ; and no society. The mere landing is an acrobatic feat, and the isolation is such that it would be sheer imprisonment to any Englishwoman. As for you, you will have your work to amuse you, and you will be often away up the country ; but what is to become of Mrs. Innes during your absence ? You cannot leave her at Langat, it is not safe ; remember, there is no European within a day's journey, man nor woman. No, you must leave her at Malacca.'

I have quoted this description at full length because we found it to be literally true, except, perhaps, that to talk of the

* Fowls that gained their living by acting as scavengers in the streets.

landing as an acrobatic feat was a slight exaggeration. One merely had to jump in a crouching posture from under the awning of one's boat and alight on a slippery rung of a sort of hurdle, which hung loosely over the mudbank into the river, and swayed to and fro with the tide. The slipperiness was due to the iridescent slime so graphically described by Miss Bird in her account of these parts; but with decently good luck and a boatman's shoulder to steady one's self by, the jump was a mere trifle to anyone accustomed to Dyak batang-walking. This last exercise, perhaps I should explain, is like rope-dancing, a batang being the stem of a tree which is simply felled and thrown across a ravine or torrent by way of bridge.

It was, perhaps, also an exaggeration to say that I could not be safely left alone at Langat, for I afterwards often tried the experiment rather than go on long expeditions

in native boats, and I never found the natives otherwise than civil and obliging. In fact, they were always particularly kind and attentive to me during Mr. Innes's absence, from the Sultan downwards, and seemed to consider themselves responsible for my safety and comfort. But until the experiment of an Englishwoman's living alone at Langat had actually been tried, it was thought impossible by everyone, in the then state of the country.

The salary per annum attached to this Paradise being only \$2,400, then equal to about £500 sterling, Mr. Innes began to feel alarmed at the prospect of having to keep up two establishments—one at Malacca and one at Langat; but he determined not to decide where I was to live till he had himself seen Langat, as he hoped a very short stay there might lead to something better.

Mr. Innes's report of Langat was that though it was a wretched place he thought I could live in it—for a time ; at any rate, he begged me to come and try. So I went by steamer from Singapore to Klang, then the capital of the State of Selangor. The Resident received me, it must be admitted, quite amiably. He was living *en garçon* in some shabby rooms over a godown (warehouse), for he had only been appointed about six months before, and his wife had not yet come out from England, there being no house fit to receive a lady. He placed a room at my disposal, which, though a bare wooden garret, was the best that Klang had to offer, and, after bestowing my luggage in it, I went out to look at the village.

Here I was amused to find all the population—Chinese, Indians, and Malays—running together to look at me, as if I.

were a wild animal. Fortunately some Malay police of the Resident's bodyguard had followed me unbidden, and they kept back the unsavoury crowd when it pressed too close. On my going into a shop these policemen stood at the door and would allow no one else to enter; but the Chinaman inside was so dazed at the apparition of his unusual customer that he could do nothing but grin insanely: he reminded me of a spider that, instead of the hoped-for fly, finds a strange insect in its web, and does not know what to do with it.

The Malay policemen explained to me that I was the first English 'mem' (lady) ever seen in the country, and that the people were very glad, considering my advent a certain sign that the war was over, and that a new era of peace and prosperity was about to begin. It was no doubt flattering to find one's self looked on

as the dove and olive-branch were on their return to the ark—a token that the troubled waters were abated ; but I think if the original dove had been mobbed at the ark window by as motley and unpleasant a crowd of animals as the population of Klang, she would have flown away again very fast. Even when I returned to my room at the godown I was not left in peace. Low-class women of three nations crowded into my bedroom to stare at me, and after I thought I had turned them all out at the front door, I would find a fresh relay of them who had come silently with their bare feet up the bath-room staircase. I only got rid of them by pretending to think they had come to see the Resident, and assuring them so often that they would find him in the office, that at last even they, dense and irrepressible though they were, were forced to take the hint and go.

Arrangements having been made for sending me on, I started in a native boat on the Langat river for Langat. This was my first experience of a long voyage in a native boat ; it was so uncomfortable that I resolved it should be my last, and during my six years' stay in the Straits I kept to my resolution, thus losing many an expedition which might have varied the monotony of my life.

The discomfort was not the fault of the Resident, who had done what he could for me, but that of the boat, which reminded me of the oubliettes that I had seen in the dungeons of the Inquisition at Rome ; it was impossible to sit or stand in it at all, on account of the very low palm-leaf awning ; one could only lie down in it, and that in a very uncomfortable position. The Resident had provided a boat-mattress of the usual sort, about an inch thick and

very hard, plenty of food, and an old woman.

The use of the old woman, he explained, was to give me importance in the eyes of the natives, who would think it very *infra dig.* were I to travel without any female attendant. Barring the honour, I would gladly have dispensed with this old creature's presence: she was frowzy in her garments and very dirty in her habits ; she chewed betel constantly, and her talk required Bowdlerizing so much that I soon pretended to know no Malay, and thus tried to silence her.

The awning of the boat was so low at the sides that it was impossible even to see the banks of the river. In front it was a little higher, but the prospect thus afforded was not exhilarating, as it consisted only of eight brown flat noses, eight enormous mouths, and eight pairs of greasy brown

shoulders, the property of the boatmen, each of whom was more hideously ape-like than his neighbour. They had very little clothing on, but quite enough to taint the air with the indescribable native bouquet, in which cocoanut-oil is the chief ingredient. Books I had none; of mosquitoes there were thousands, and of ants many hundreds, which swarmed over the food and my clothing and completed my disgust.

The voyage ought properly to have only lasted eight hours, in which case it would have been endurable, but Malays never hurry themselves when there is no white man present, and these boatmen consequently took it very coolly. Whenever they passed a hut on the bank—which, fortunately, was not often, for the country was very thinly populated—they stopped and went on shore, returning with hands full of bananas and sugar-cane, begged,

borrowed, or stolen from the owners. In this way they contrived to lose the tide ; this exactly suited their views, as they now had an excuse for sleeping several hours until it turned. The result was that the voyage took four-and-twenty hours instead of eight. I was in perfect misery the whole time, for, besides the ants, smells, mosquitoes, dirty old woman and uncomfortable position before mentioned, it was a great trial to be deprived of the three daily baths necessary to keep one cool in this climate.

For an English *man*, a long boat-voyage is not nearly so bad, as he can bathe whenever he likes. He has only to slip on a Malay sarong and bathe in public, as the natives do. My old duenna did so, standing in her sarong, while a friendly boatman poured buckets of water over her head, and the whole population of the boat and wig-wam looked on with interest. She pressed

me to imitate her example ; but such is the force of early prejudice, that, finding privacy was out of the question, I preferred to endure my sufferings like a martyr. A sarong, perhaps I should explain, is a piece of drapery like a 'round towel' in form, which, after the first bucket of water, clings to the figure like the drapery of a Greek statue. My elderly companion did not resemble any Greek statue I had ever seen, being extremely stout and repulsive-looking.

A weary afternoon, evening, and night, succeeded each other, and were succeeded in their turn by a still wearier morning and afternoon. I constantly asked the boatmen how much farther it was to Langat, but they did not appear to know exactly. Sometimes they told me it was so many tanjongs (bends of the river) off ; but when I had counted that number go

by, they said they had been mistaken, and it was more tanjongs still. If I asked how many more? I received the unfailing Malay answer. 'Tidak tūntu'—'It is not certain.' At last, when in despair I had given up asking them, I was informed Langat was in sight. Soon we arrived at the landing-place before mentioned, and having reached terra firma as well as limbs stiffened by twenty-four hours of oubliette would allow, I walked towards the house. Mr. Innes had had no notice of my coming, as postal arrangements there were none in the country, but a boatman ran on ahead to tell him, and he came out to meet us.

The house was worse than I had expected. It was an ordinary Malay wig-wam, made partly of dried palm-leaves, and partly of wooden boards, and raised about four feet from the ground on wooden piles. It had no verandas, but

consisted merely of a biggish loft—called the Court-room, where Mr. Innes was to hear cases brought before him by the natives—and of two or three little compartments at the back. We turned the latter into bedrooms and a store-room, while the passage between them served as a dining-room. The palm-leaf roof was tolerably watertight ; but owing to there being no verandas, the only way of keeping out the rain was by shutting the small wooden shutters, which shut out the light as well, so that when there was a storm we had to choose between sitting in darkness till it was over, and abandoning our belongings to the mercy of the elements. Mr. Innes generally preferred the latter course, but the consequence was that during a storm the Court-room was often swept completely bare of furniture by the wind, and we had to go out afterwards

and pick up everything it had contained, for it had no walls on two sides. Papers, ledgers, pens, inkstands, rulers, and even the cane chairs and tables were blown out on to the mud below ; fortunately the mud was so sticky, and the rain so heavy, that the papers never flew far, though sometimes they were reduced to a pulp by the shower.

As soon as the sun had gone down, we went out to look at the village, I being anxious to know the worst at once and get it over. The first bit of the mud-path took us between Malay wigwams, called by courtesy the bazaar, where squalid wares were displayed hanging from strings, or shut up in glass bottles on account of the ants. The population turned out to look at us ; some glowered sulkily, others called out 'Tabek, Tuan !' ('Salaam, sir !') in shrill cracked voices. They were all

Malays of the poorest class, except a few Chinese shopkeepers and carpenters.

Having passed the bazaar and the Sultan's palace—a dilapidated wooden building—we continued our walk. Here the path became narrower, and it was necessary to walk in single file, as the surrounding ground consisted of seething black mud. Land-crabs darted into their holes as we appeared, and the ikan biludu (velvet fish), an amphibious creature, hopped on and off the slimy logs that lay rotting in the sun. The only vegetation was a kind of bog-myrtle, and the only rising-ground to be seen in the country was a hill about four miles off, called Jugra.

At about two hundred yards from the last wigwam the path came to an abrupt end, and lost itself in the swamp. We stopped a minute or two to look at the hill

of Jugra, and agreed aloud that if we had to remain six months in this fearful place we must either leave the service or commit suicide. That settled, we turned round to go home, but here a difficulty occurred. We had been followed, according to a regulation issued in consequence of the murder of Mr. Birch, by a little Malay 'orderly' with a loaded gun. The path was so narrow and the youth was so fat that it seemed impossible to pass him without tumbling him down into the mud. He stood edgeways in an attitude of 'attention'; but his figure being of the sort that has no real edge, this only made matters worse than before. We had serious thoughts of telling him to go on in front till the path grew wider; but to do so would have been in the eyes of a Malay much as if in England one were to mount the box of one's own carriage, bidding the

coachman seat himself inside; the invariable rule among Malays being that the person of highest rank walks in front. At length we took heart of grace and passed him, when to our relief we found that his bare feet were prehensile, and took such firm hold of the roots of bog-myrtle that it would have been difficult to dislodge him.

CHAPTER II.

MY OCCUPATIONS.

E soon settled down in Langat to our every-day life. Indeed, there was not much to settle down to, which made the operation the quicker. I passed my days in my bare wooden bedroom, sometimes trying to teach myself to read or write Malay, anon mending clothes and house-linen, generally to the accompaniment of a murmur of voices from the Court - room. Mending the clothes is a task thrown upon the ‘mem’ (mistress) by Eastern servants when there is no ayah, although before the Tuan’s

(master's) marriage, all his mending is cheerfully done for him by his 'boy.'

The 'boy's' tactics to avoid betraying to the men that he knows how to sew are amusing. If engaging himself to a new mem who knows nothing about him, he will roundly swear that he never had a needle in his hand in his life; while if he has been the Tuan's servant in his bachelor days and therefore cannot deny his sewing powers, he will keep any garment entrusted to him many weeks, and finally return it so badly mended that the last state of that garment is worse than the first. As a matter of fact, I believe all Malay men of the lower class can sew neatly. The women sometimes weave the material for their own sarongs, but having done that, hand them to the men to be sewn. The women, in fact, when they do any work at all, which was not often the case at Langat, seem to

do all the hardest part, and may be seen digging in their gardens or pounding rice, while the men sleep in the shade.

Mending the clothes gave me plenty to do, for we never wore anything that would not wash, and they came back from the tender mercies of the Klang dhoby once a fortnight in a sad state, however new or good they might have been when they reached him. The mending, if done properly, would have taken three of me to execute ; as it was, I did what I could, and let the rest go. I preferred this state of things, strange as it may appear, very much to the trouble of having an ayah. My English relations were always urging upon me that it would be a great comfort to me to have an ayah ; but I knew better. They fancied it must be a safeguard and an addition to one's respectability ; but in reality the reverse is the case.

The women who go out as ayahs in Malaya are the most degraded in the land. They are ready to steal, lie, drink, poison their master and mistress, or join in a plot for murdering them at any moment. They have much greater opportunities of doing harm, and of knowing where everything is kept, than the menservants, for they are necessarily allowed to go freely about the bedrooms at all hours, whereas the men only enter them for a few minutes in the morning to sweep and put fresh water. In the case of the murder at Pangkor, where I was afterwards present, it was undoubtedly the Chinese ayah who made everything ready for the murderers, and stole the revolver of the master of the house, thus rendering him perfectly helpless; and in the jewel-robberies and burglaries which occur so frequently in Singapore and Penang, the ayah generally plays a con-

spicuous part. Singapore ladies used often to say to me, 'If I had no children, nothing should induce me to let an ayah into the house;' and the wife of the Resident at Klang, after trying two or three ayahs, gave them up in despair and reverted to men-servants, though she had a helpless child, incapable of walking alone. The ayahs, besides their talents for theft and intrigue, spend a great part of their time in making love to the men-servants, so that they by no means add to the respectability of the *ménage*; in fact, it is not at all unusual for the Tuan magistrate's ayah in the country to be 'run in' by the police, and brought up before her master for disorderly conduct. This does not happen in Singapore, where the class of ayahs is a shade more respectable; but in Malaya, as in England, the best servants cannot be induced, for love or money, to bury

themselves in desolate wilds such as Langat.

Often my peaceful occupations were disturbed by natives prowling round the house, who descried me in my room and shouted ‘Tabek, mem!’ at me. I used to dislike this a good deal, but could not conceal the top of my head from them unless by shutting the shutters; and as long as they saw the top of my head and thus knew I was in the room, they would continue to shout. Sometimes, wishing to put an end to the annoyance, I went to the window, and said in a snubbing manner: ‘Tabek, what is it you want? I am very busy.’ Then those outside looked most hurt, and shocked at what they evidently considered my bad manners, while on turning away from the window I found the room full of others, squatting on the floor as if they had taken root, and filling the air

with a detestable smell of cocoanut-oil and
'moist unpleasant bodies.'

It was of no use to give these women the broadest hints that one preferred their room to their company at first. I sometimes said to them, 'Now, good-morning ; I have to bathe and change my dress.' They replied, 'Good-morning,' but, instead of going, they settled themselves down more comfortably than ever, while their brightening eyes and smiling faces showed that they thought they were in great luck at having come just when so delightful an entertainment was about to begin.

It was the same with the men in our sitting-room. They would call and sit squatting on the floor for hours, saying nothing, and seeming quite contented to stare at us. On one occasion I remember it was particularly awkward ; the Resident was with us, and we had fresh pork for dinner,

a most unusual treat. Two strange rajas had come to see the Resident, and would not go away. I told the Resident dinner was quite ready, but as it consisted of pork, we were afraid of hurting the rajas' feelings by having it put on the table. 'I will soon settle that,' said the Resident, and turned to the rajas, saying, with a bow of dismissal, 'Pray excuse us; we are going to dinner.' But the rajas were not to be so beaten; they merely said, 'Tuan,' and sat on placidly. Presently somebody apologized to them for not inviting them to join our meal, as the habits of Malays and English in the matter of feeding were very different. To this they replied politely that they believed the habits of the English were in every respect superior to those of the Malays (!), and that with our permission, although their religion forbade them to join us, they would have much

pleasure in looking on. In short, it was impossible to make them stir, and there they sat, all through dinner, while pork was eaten and alcoholic liquors were circulated round the table that would have made the Prophet's hair stand on end.

I gave orders to the Malay policeman on guard that he was not to allow strangers to come round to the back of the house, but it was of no avail. He thought it his duty to walk to and fro in front of the house, while my persecutors came from everywhere but the front. One only of these visits proved rather amusing. Three Chinawomen, wives of shopkeepers, came one day and asked an audience of me. They explained that they were going to be had up by the police for gambling without a license, and they wished me to beg the Tuan to let them off from their punishment (a fine). They assured me that they

had not really gambled, but were only playing ‘a little child’s game’ at cards, merely for amusement; and one of them let me see clearly in her hand a dollar, which I am quite sure from her manner she would with the slightest encouragement have put into mine. Somehow, instead of rousing my indignation, the idea of a low Chinawoman’s thinking she could bribe me with dollars to pervert justice in Langat amused me excessively, and for a moment I was tempted to lead her on till she had committed herself; but recollecting that it would be more easy to excite her suspicions than to allay them, I forbore, and treated her and her companions instead to an harangue on the subject of English justice and English law, the effect of which was, I felt, considerably marred by the broken Malay in which it was uttered.

Sometimes I had to jump up suddenly

from my work when a comparatively cool breeze swept through the room. This in the tropics is a warning that a shower is impending. Looking out of the window over the plain, we became aware of a thick wall of white mist, like cotton-wool, advancing towards us, blotting out the landscape as it came. It was then about a couple of miles off. We heard a noise like a distant waterfall, and we saw the cotton-wool gaining first one clump of shrubs and then another, with incredible swiftness. Then it reached the herd of buffaloes in the middle distance, and enveloped them; the breeze freshened; everything in the room, unless we had occupied the previous minutes in making all secure, flew up into the air or out at the doorway, and there was barely time to rush to the window, unhook the shutters and shut and bolt them with frantic haste, before the storm

burst on the house with a roar like that of Niagara, and a violence that seemed likely to batter down the frail roof.

If I wished to go from one room to another during a storm, I had to put on galoshes, hat, and ulster, tuck up my skirts and make a rush for it. The open doorways in all directions left even the middle of the house liable to incursions of rain. And such rain ! However, we soon grew accustomed to it ; so much so that when I returned to England, after four years of tropical climates, the silence—the quiet, modest demeanour—of the English rain was one of the things that struck me most. It seemed strange to me that one should have to look out of the window in order to know whether it was raining or not. In Langat when it rained no one in the house could possibly have remained unconscious of the fact. We could often not hear each other's loudest shouts a few yards off.

The thunder in those parts is also worth hearing ; it is sublime—magnificent ! and makes one for ever after laugh involuntarily at the puny little noises which in England go by that name, and which seem in comparison like the growl of a kitten.

Another cause of disturbance was the ever-present mosquito. He literally made my life a burden to me. The Langat mosquitoes I afterwards found were quite renowned as being of a specially thirsty and venomous nature. On one occasion an official from another jungle station came to visit us on business ; he had been in Australia, and all over Malaya, and laughed at us for our terror of mosquitoes, saying he was mosquito-proof, at any rate in the daytime, though at night he did like a curtain ; but luncheon was not half over before we were avenged. Our ‘mosquito-proof’ friend jumped up from his chair in

agony, crying out, ‘Do you call these mosquitoes? they are *fiends!*’

Our lives were extremely dull—especially mine. We tried to get books from the Circulating Library in Singapore, but failed because there were only two Europeans (our two selves) in the district, and there was no regular communication at all between Langat and the outside world. We had hoped that these facts would have been thought strong reasons why a point should be stretched in our favour; but it was not so. We received a printed paper to be filled in, containing questions, one of which was: ‘Which is the leading member of the European community at Langat?’—a question which was amusing under the circumstances.

Having failed in this direction, we sent home for books and newspapers. We ordered six of the latter, besides several

magazines, to be constantly sent to us, but from various causes we did not reap the full benefit of this arrangement. Our papers, especially the illustrated ones, were more often than not stolen, or delayed for months, on the way ; and of those that did eventually reach our hands, the greater part had the post-marks on them : ' Missent to Bombay,' ' Missent to Hong-Kong,' ' Missent to Deli,' and so forth. Postal officials seemed to be under the impression that ' Singapore,' which was part of our address, must be an Indian name, while Langat was often confounded with Langkat, near Deli, in Sumatra.

Some of the day was got rid of by bathing two or three times, and the consequent dressing and undressing. But, as a Singapore lady once remarked to me : ' What is the use of dressing three times

a day if there is no one to look at you when it is done?

Some more time was disposed of in eating and drinking—or rather in sitting at the table and looking at food—for the debilitating effects of the climate and want of exercise did not leave us much appetite. There were still many hours during which we either had nothing to do, or could do nothing, from heat, ennui, and mosquitoes. These latter, after visiting us by tens at a time during the day, rose up at sunset in their thousands from the swamp with an audible hum like that of a distant swarm of bees. In the evening we escaped them by taking refuge in the ‘mosquito-house.’

This was a sort of large square cage made of wooden bars with mosquito-net nailed to it; it had a door, and if we managed to pop in and shut the door very quickly behind us, we were tolerably com-

fortable inside (except for the intense heat) for the rest of the evening. The cage contained a couple of rattan lounges, and a small table; on the latter we put our lamp and our books or work, while thousands of baffled insects of all kinds swarmed on the netting outside, gazing into our Eden like so many Peris, and thirsting for our blood. I should often have liked to do my sewing in the mosquito-house in the daytime, but could not, because it had been erected in the Court-room, the only room large enough to hold it ; and it would not have done for me to be in the Court-room while cases were being tried. It would have distracted the attention of the witnesses, and would besides have had an unofficial look, even more in the eyes of Malays, if possible, than of Europeans, as the former, like all savages, jealously exclude their women, wherever they can, from

all concerns of life, except the purely domestic.

We walked on the mud-path every day in the year, when the weather permitted it, and when Mr. Innes was at home. If he was away, I walked on the mud-path alone. We never quite reached the pitch of heroism necessary to 'do the mud-path' more than once per day, though doubtless it would have been good for our health if we had.

Now and then we came on the old Sultan, seated astride on a carpenter's bench, or else squatting on the ground, amid a crowd of dirty followers, watching a cock-fight. He was a potentate of ancient lineage and much former renown as a pirate, but had given up his piratical ways on taking the British Government to his bosom. He was usually dressed in nothing but a very scanty little cotton kilt, or a pair of still scantier bathing-drawers, and was at first sight

hardly distinguishable from an old Malay peasant ; but on seeing us he would skip nimbly off the carpenter's bench, notwithstanding his advanced age, and taking a jacket from the hands of one of the rabble his attendants, would tie the sleeves round his neck and come to meet us. He would then make a few condescending remarks, and finally wave us off with his hand in a most dignified manner, saying : 'Jalan ! jalan !' ('You may go on walking'). At first I was inclined to laugh at the impertinence of the unclothed old savage, as I considered him, thus giving us—us, free-born Britons ! —his gracious permission to walk ; but on reflection I considered that the country was his, and we were only there by his invitation, and that the fact of his dress being rather airy did not really affect the question.

He was a curiously withered-looking little

old man, so thin that every bone in his body stood out in bold relief against a background of loose brown skin; he wore a coloured handkerchief on his head, and on high days and holidays a jacket of sprigged silk buttoned with diamonds over his kilt. As time went on we grew to have not only a feeling of warm friendship, but even of respect for him. He was invariably kind to us, and I believe to everybody. During our whole stay in Langat he constantly sent us presents of fruit and flowers, and occasionally when he had killed a buffalo, of a small lump of buffalo beef, which we made into soup, as it was too tough to cook otherwise.

When Mr. Innes was away, the Sultan several times sent messengers to me to say that if I felt afraid to remain in the house alone, he would send a guard of his own men to protect me till Mr. Innes's return. I always replied that I was not in the least

afraid, but was very much obliged to him, and that should any trouble arise I would gladly accept his kind offer; and this was nothing but the literal truth. It seems to be the general impression in England that the Malay nature is ‘treacherous, blood-thirsty, and cruel;’ but I am so far from having found it so, that I almost regret that no occasion ever arose for me to test the value of the Sultan’s promises, since I am convinced they would have stood the test triumphantly.

The Sultan was, I heard, much gratified at my reply, taking my not being afraid as a high compliment to the security and peacefulness of his country. In truth, if he had but known it, his country was far more peaceful than England, and life and property were more secure in it than in London. There were no dynamiters in Langat; and I know no ‘civilized’

country where it would be possible to leave your house perfectly open night and day for years as we did, without any serious loss of property. When we went away for a day or a week, we left everything about, even the drawing-room ornaments on the table, putting the house and all its contents under the charge of Apat, our house-boy ; and we invariably found everything exactly as we had left it, on our return. This security of property was, I am afraid, only for us ; as the natives, to judge by the cases brought before Mr. Innes in Court, seemed to pass the greater part of their lives in stealing from each other.

The Sultan sometimes got into trouble through his benevolent wish of pleasing everybody. He gave grants and monopolies of all sorts of things to all sorts of people, and then forgot that he had done so, and gave them over again to others. This occa-

sioned considerable difficulty in settling the rival claims of the grantees.

Although his appearance was by no means majestic, and when skipping about in the bazaar among the carpenters he might seem to be a little wanting in oriental calm and dignity, he could assume both to perfection when he chose. I was present once on the homage-day, when all his subjects, rajas included, came crawling to kiss his hand. None of them dared approach him without grovelling on the ground, their two hands clasped in supplication as before a god ; and anyone having to cross the room in his presence, crawled sideways on all-fours like a crab. Datus, rajas, and Tunkus, who were all bold enough when he was not by, subsided on to the floor and spoke in timid whispers, and he gave them his hand to kiss as if it were a great favour.

When it was over the Sultan remarked to

us that now, since the white man had come into his country, he was no longer afraid for his life on homage-day ; but that formerly, when there were many ambitious rajas who would have liked to become Sultan, he was always expecting that one or other of them would seize the opportunity of stabbing him. He told us that such things formerly often happened when Sultans were receiving homage, as on no other occasion were well-known dangerous characters allowed to come so near the royal person.

We felt glad to know that this poor old man had received any benefit at all from the ‘protection’ of the British Government, for we fancied we saw, in his talk and demeanour, occasional signs that he felt the loss of dignity entailed on him by his revenue being collected, and his laws altered and administered for him, by aliens. He bore it very well on the whole ; but on

certain occasions—as, for instance, when Mr. Innes was ordered to propose to him that he should receive a fixed allowance of \$1,000 a month, instead of an uncertain income depending on the amount of revenue collected—he was evidently much distressed, and only agreed to it, we believed, from feeling himself powerless to cope with the English Government.

The Sultan of Selangor is the father of his people in many ways. All waifs and strays, either human beings or animals, may go and quarter themselves on him, and be sure of rice and shelter for an indefinite time. I became aware of this custom in the following way : There was an unwholesome and predatory cat that had attached itself to our premises ; it used to eat my young chickens, and then come and lie down on some bed or sofa in our house. As its skin was in a horrible condition, this

was very unpleasant, so I gave orders to Suteh, the orderly (or 'disorderly,' as we called him, from his untidy habits), to catch it. After many days he succeeded in doing so, and brought it to me, asking, as if it were a matter of course, whether he should take it to the Sultan's? I said, certainly not; why should he suppose the Sultan wanted a mangy cat that ate chickens? Suteh seemed quite surprised at my question, and told me it was the rule in Langat, whenever there was a cat or a dog that no one wanted, to take it to the royal palace. This doubtless accounted for the great number of pariah dogs that surrounded the Sultan's house. The custom of allowing all human waifs and strays to come to the Sultan for food we could not but admire ; it made death by starvation—such as too often happens in England—a simple impossibility.

The Sultan appeared to hold Mr. Innes in high favour, and one day, when he was at the palace, said he wished to make him a little present. A slave then came forward at the Sultan's bidding, and was unrolling something from a silk handkerchief, when Mr. Innes, seeing it was of gold, prevented him from unrolling it further, and assured the Sultan that he could not take anything of such value—it was against the rules of the service. The Sultan seemed disappointed, and said, 'But if my wife were to give it to Mrs. Innes, that would be all right—would it not?' Mr. Innes replied, no—that anything given to his wife was given to him, and belonged to him. (When he repeated this to me, I was inclined to demur; however, the Married Women's Property Act had not yet been passed.) On this the Sultan said, 'Ah, well, the Governor is coming here shortly, and then

I shall ask his permission to give it you.' But unfortunately the Governor did not come (it was in Sir William Robinson's time that this happened), so we never heard anything more of the intended present. I was rather sorry, as I believe we should have been allowed to accept it on paying its price at a valuation, the money to be spent by Government on a return-present to the Sultan; and I should have liked to possess it as a curiosity.

CHAPTER III.

MR. INNES'S OCCUPATIONS.

MR. INNES was a little better off for employment than I, but not much. He had his magistrate's work to do in the daytime, but there was not enough of it to keep him constantly employed, and the cases brought before him were so trivial and unsatisfactory that he could not feel much interest in them. They were generally of petty theft; a great many witnesses were sworn on both sides, and after the magistrate had given his best attention and had settled the case as well as

he could in the face of conflicting evidence, he would be told in confidence by some officious Malay that the whole accusation was a got-up affair, the real matter at issue between the parties being a feeling of 'sakit-hati,' or grudge (literally, *sick heart*), at each other, dating, perhaps, from twenty or thirty years back, or perhaps even handed down from father to son as an hereditary feud.

'But how about the sarong which was brought into court?' would the puzzled magistrate ask. 'Did not the Inchi and his followers, who swore so solemnly that it had been stolen, believe what they swore?'

'Oh no, Tuan, certainly not. Neither side believed it. Everybody knows that sarong has never been out of its owner's possession.'

'Then what is the object of their all

coming to me with this story about the theft of a sarong ?'

' Tuan, they know that they cannot bring a case of "sakit-hati," or grudge, as such, before the English magistrate, because it is not an indictable offence ; yet both parties wished to appeal to the English Tuan's well-known sense of justice, so they invented the story of the sarong having been stolen—that is all.'

That was not, however, quite all ; for the indignant magistrate, feeling that he had been befooled, gave the Malay police-sergeant strict orders that in future he was to inquire into all cases before bringing them for trial, and never to bring up fictitious ones any more. This was easier said than done, for often the sergeant himself did not, with all his inquiries, find out that a case was fictitious before it came into court ; but it was sublime to see his wrath,

and the summary way in which he cleared the court, when it dawned upon him that he had been taken in.

These 'sakit-hati' cases were very real things to the Malays, and Mr. Innes was often asked to settle them in a private capacity, which he was always glad to do. He confined his part of the affair chiefly to appointing a meeting between the two parties, and quietly listening, cigar in mouth, while they talked at, not to, each other. Turning his back on his enemy, and appearing not to observe his presence, one of them would begin his story of grievances. He addressed himself apparently to no one in particular, but to the air or the audience in general. The other would reply from time to time, also with his back turned, and with an air of unconsciousness that anyone but his own followers heard him. Each set of followers

from time to time murmured acquiescence in its own chief's point of view.

After this had gone on some time, the disputants would warm to their work, and, turning round, would cast off all pretence of indifference, and bitterly upbraid each other, finally appealing to the Tuan for his opinion. By that time the Tuan had gained considerable insight into the affair, and had no difficulty in coming to a decision that gave tolerable satisfaction to both sides. In truth, they were probably disposed to agree with each other before coming, and their referring the matter to the Tuan was in itself a sign that they were tired of their feud. Having relieved their feelings by 'having it out,' and salved their dignity by letting each other's followers see that they had met on equal terms, and that neither chief had given in, they were quite willing to be friends again.

I do not know why they should not have quietly met together, and ‘had it out’ without troubling the Tuan at all; but possibly because, had he not been there to guarantee good faith and personal safety, krises might have been drawn, and blood shed. Every Malay wears a kris in his belt, and on occasions of excitement is far too apt to use it. This aptitude has, however, been greatly checked by the advent of the English Residents, and by the introduction of hanging as a punishment.

Now and then a case of murder came to relieve the monotony of the petty-theft cases. One of these was rather interesting, from the curious view the old Sultan took of it. Two brothers had quarrelled while flying their kites. The elder was a man of about thirty, and the younger a boy of fifteen or thereabouts. It may seem strange for a man of thirty to be occupied

in literal kite-flying ; but Chinese and Malays consider it a game suitable to all ages. The strings of the two brothers' kites became entangled ; thence ensued a quarrel, and the boy, in a moment of ungovernable rage, seeing his brother's knife in the folds of his sarong, seized it, and stabbed him to the heart. He was immediately brought before the Sultan. Evidence was given that the elder brother had bullied the younger for years, and that the latter was now the only remaining son of his old father. The Sultan decided that as the elder brother had been unmarried, and there was therefore no widow or orphan to claim that his blood should be avenged, there was no occasion at all to punish the fratricide.

' If I were to order the boy to be slain,' was the Sultan's argument, ' harm, and not good, would result. This poor old

man has already lost one of his sons ; it would be cruel to deprive him of his sole remaining prop. It is entirely a family matter—no one belonging to any other family is injured ; therefore, let it be strictly hushed up.' The last injunction of course meant, ' Do not tell the English magistrate ;' and it was so understood by all present, and obeyed for a time. But 'murder will out,' even in Malaya ; and at the end of six months the sergeant of police brought the whole story to Mr. Innes, with so many circumstantial details and credible witnesses, that, although it was awkward for him to be obliged to reopen a question already settled by the nominal ruler of the country, he had no choice but to send for the youth, and have him tried for murder by the Resident.

In consideration of the tyranny of the elder brother, of the prisoner's youth, and

of the blow having been unpremeditated (as was proved by the boy's having no weapon of his own at hand, but making use of his brother's), the verdict was manslaughter, with extenuating circumstances. What code of laws the English residents and magistrates in the Native States followed, I do not know: I believe they were supposed to follow the laws of the country, except where these clashed very decidedly with English ideas of justice.

A case of piracy threw us all into a state of mild excitement on another occasion. Lonely fishermen living in their huts along the seashore, and in the habit of visiting the Bandar periodically to sell salt-fish and buy stores, were missed; and their friends, going in search of them, found their dead bodies in their huts, with marks of violence on them, the huts being plundered of everything of value. Then boats began to be

found bottom uppermost on the beach, with corpses covered with wounds floating near them. There was a sort of scare among the poorer Malays and Chinese when these evidences of piracy were observed, and many of them left their isolated huts near the coast, and came into the villages inland.

Mr. Innes doubled the police at all the stations along the seashore, and sent his cleverest men there, promising them rewards if they could capture the pirates. This had the desired effect ; and one dark night, Sergeant Ali, with his men, had a desperate affray with two boats full of pirates, fresh from a new murder. Some of the police were wounded in the struggle, and one boatful of pirates got clear off, but of the other boatful several were wounded, and two captured. All but the two escaped by plunging into the river.

The Resident came up to Langat to hear the case; and as there was no doubt whatever of the guilt of the two prisoners, he put on his black cap, and sentenced them to be hanged. They made a complete confession of their guilt, not seeming in the least ashamed of themselves, but quite the reverse. Indeed, the truth was, they were only a little behind the fashion of their day; for a year or two back piracy had been the ordinary occupation of all the Malay rajas, from the Sultan downwards; and one of his sons, Tunku Alang, who continued the practice for some time after he had been warned by the English Resident to desist, had a narrow escape of being hanged for it. He was only got off with difficulty by an able lawyer, whom the old Sultan had implored, with tears in his eyes, to save his son.

From the confession of the two con-

victed pirates, the number of those who had escaped was known, and the excitement still continued, though in a modified form. The police, as is usual in similar cases all over the world, made a few mistakes. They fired into the boat in which a shopkeeper and his family were taking the air, supposing them to be pirates. They hurt the feelings severely of another poor man, who came to complain to Mr. Innes. He said he had been to Klang to buy and sell ; the Klang police locked him up three days on suspicion of being a pirate, and then let him go. He was hastening back to Langat, when the Resident, who was fresh from pronouncing sentence on the two pirates, met him on the river, and took him up again on suspicion. On reaching Klang, and making inquiries about him, the Resident let him go ; but he now found himself pointed at

in the street as the man who had been twice taken up for a pirate, and he requested compensation. I fear this poor man did not get much sympathy ; I believe he was recommended to wash his face and cut his hair, and try to look a little less like a pirate if possible ; and as for compensation, he was told there was no precedent that exactly fitted his case.

The Malay public opinion was not at all in favour of the two pirates being hanged. Malays have a particular objection to being hanged ; I mean, even a more particular objection than most people. They say 'it is the death of a dog,' and that Allah disapproves of human beings being killed in that manner, as it is evidenced by the fact (?) that after a hanging there are drops of blood in the rain of the next shower.

Apropos of murders, we noticed a curious

peculiarity in the Malays and Chinese. They invariably laughed when reporting them ; and when Mr. Innes went to view the body, he used to find all the bystanders on the broad grin. They meant no harm by it ; it was only a habit. A Chinaman or a Malay always laughs when he tells you any bad news, or when any untoward accident happens. A servant smiles when he tells you that his mother or father is dead ; he also smiles blandly when he brings you the remnants of your watch or your looking-glass, which he has smashed into a hundred pieces. Mr. Innes once trod on a hornet, and was badly stung in the foot. Taip, the cook, who was by, laughed so immoderately at the accident, that Mr. Innes was much tempted to use his other foot, which was uninjured, in kicking him.

Collecting the revenue was another of

Mr. Innes's duties. Unfortunately there was not very much to collect. The chief source of the revenue was tin from the mines in the Ulu (interior) of the country. The owners of the mines were all Chinamen, and seemed to be in a chronic condition of bankruptcy. They were always wanting to borrow money from the Government to enable them to carry on the working of the mines, and had already succeeded in borrowing so much that the Government could have sold them up any day. But it was of no use to sell them up, as there was no one else to take their places; so, bankrupts though they were, they were allowed to struggle on.

During Mr. Innes's visits to the tin-mines, or to the fishing-stakes along the coast, I never heard any news of him from the time he left Langat until his return. He generally told me before starting how

long he thought he should be away; but sometimes, if going to a new place, he could not tell. It was a little trying to have to sit at home for days together and wait, wondering if he would ever reappear, or if any of the numerous possible accidents by flood or jungle, fever or sunstroke, had befallen him.

Of murder by the natives or Chinese I seldom thought, as he was very popular with them, and indeed generally returned full of praises of their thoughtfulness and devotion, of the excellent meals with which Raja Mahmoud of Selangor had hospitably entertained him, of the endurance and pluck which Kechut and the other boatmen had shown, or of the unlimited champagne which the bankrupt Captain China, after the fashion of many bankrupts, caused to flow in his guests' honour.

The perfect safety with which Mr. Innes

and Captain Murray of Sungei Ujong, our nearest and most highly valued neighbour, went about among the natives day and night, unarmed, has always rather surprised me. Captain Murray told me that he never dreamt of keeping a revolver under his pillow at night, as some Europeans did ; but slept, as we did, in rooms that had six or eight ever-open doorways, so that all the world might come in and murder him if they liked. He knew very well he had gained the hearts of the people so completely, that not one of them would have touched a hair of his head.

He used to doctor them in their illnesses with great success ; and natives have told me, with admiration, that the Tuan Besar (great lord) of Sungei Ujong would jump on his pony and gallop eight miles to give medicine to an old woman. The red-tapeists of Singapore—Colonial Secretaries,

and so forth—did not admire this kindness of heart in Captain Murray ; they thought it *infra dig*. But I am sure it is the truest policy, and that the Malays apply quite a different standard to Englishmen from that which they apply to their own great men. The latter are selfish, lazy, and tyrannical ; the Malays look for these qualities in them, as the proper marks of power and high birth.

To see a Malay raja swaggering along the roads is one of the most ridiculous things possible. The greater the personage he fancies himself, the slower he walks. Tunku Dia Udin, the Viceroy of Selangor, after putting down one foot, used to remain poised on it for many seconds, while he slowly swung the other, together with the second half of his body, round in front of it. His twenty or thirty followers, who walked *en queue* behind him according to

their rank, all imitated this strut more or less in their degree. But a Malay does not expect to see Englishmen strut à la raja, nor is he shocked at an exhibition of energy or kindness in an Englishman, as he would be were the perpetrator a noble Malay.

On the contrary, Malays seem to expect all English to have a knowledge of doctoring, and Mr. Innes and I had not been long at Langat before we found ourselves forced into the position of general practitioners to the whole neighbourhood. Mr. Innes really did know something of the craft, having picked up a smattering of it in China, Sarawak, and elsewhere ; but no one in the world knew less about it than I. However, notwithstanding my protests, both men and women constantly came to me to be doctored, and during Mr. Innes's absence in Klang and elsewhere, I could not refuse to help them. I had three grand medicines,

with one or other of which I met all the cases submitted to me. They were quinine, chlorodyne, and castor-oil.

I did not meddle with the decoctions sent up by the apothecary from Klang, as they were all mixed with water, which very quickly turned putrid, to judge from its appearance and smell, and my chief rule was never to give any medicine to the natives that I would not have taken myself had I required it. It may have been owing to this rule that my medicines answered remarkably well. Not only did I never kill anybody, which is perhaps more than some M.D.'s could say, but my patients got well very quickly. They were a little apt to delay their recovery in cases where chlorodyne was given, because they liked the medicine ; the police especially were not long in discovering that it had a flavour of their beloved opium, on which they usually

spent a large part of their pay. When I suspected shamming, I used to say to the man, ‘ You have been unwell so long, I fear this medicine, chlorodyne, does not suit you ; I will now try a little alterative treatment,’ and insisted on his swallowing a dose of Epsom salts, or something equally nasty, in my presence ; this always cured him at once.

A man was brought to me one day, in Mr. Innes’s absence, with four stabs about the region of the heart. One seemed a very big wound, and, as I had never attempted any surgical operations before, I shrank back, telling his companions I did not understand that sort of case, and was afraid to undertake it. The men seemed disappointed, but said resignedly, ‘ Very well, mem, then we must take him to the Malay doctor.’ I knew what this meant, for cases of Malay doctoring had often

come before us, when too late to be remedied.

The Malay treatment for an open wound was to put on it a plaster composed of mud and of various leaves culled in the jungle by an old woman. The result invariably was that the wound festered ; sometimes after that it got well, but much more often it gangrened or mortified, and ended in death. So I said, ‘No, do not take him to a Malay doctor ; I will try what I can do.’

I then dressed the wounds as well as I knew how, putting on lint and bandages, with plenty of some ointment labelled ‘simple dressing’ next to the wound, to prevent the lint from sticking. When the man came to me next day to have the dressing changed, I was delighted to find the wounds looking clean, cool and healthy, and already closing up most marvellously ;

they seemed only half the size they had been the day before.

I had often tried this ‘simple dressing’ on myself for aggravated mosquito-bites, and found it excellent. The great thing in a hot country, when you have an open wound, is to keep it from the thousand-and-one insects that are ready to fasten on it. A piece of lint no doubt might answer the purpose, if one could only keep it wet; but it is difficult for an invalid, even during the day, to summon up the patience and energy necessary for wetting it afresh every five minutes; and at night, either he must sacrifice his rest or the lint must get dry, and stick to the wound, irritating and inflaming it. This is the result of my personal experience, and I make a present of it to all whom it may concern.

Mr. Innes always said he believed the ‘simple dressing,’ which was sent to us

with other medicines from Klang, was neither more nor less than hog's lard, the thought of using which would have been horrible to these Mahometan Malays ; but I cannot think that the Government, knowing their prejudices, would risk offending them by treachery of this kind, after the lesson taught by the Indian Mutiny.

The Malay doctors had one great drawback, in addition to their ignorance ; if their patient survived their treatment, they made his life a burden to him by dunning him for money during the remainder of it. My valuable advice was of course given gratis, and from pure philanthropy, which was probably the reason why it was so much sought after. I took a real interest in all my 'cases,' and I have no doubt they saw that I did so.

CHAPTER IV.

MALAY MANNERS.

IKE a prisoner with his mouse or his spider, I tried to make interests for myself out of rather unpromising materials, since none better were to be had. First, I tried the native women. I was anxious to learn colloquial Malay, as what little I knew of the language was gleaned entirely from books. So when the women of the place began to call on me, I encouraged them to come at stated hours by giving them coffee and cakes. But we soon found this a great mistake. They had no notion of confining themselves to stated

hours, but came at all times of the day and night, up to ten o'clock p.m., in mobs of twenty or thirty at a time ; the house being quite open on all sides, it was impossible to keep them out.

They were of the very lowest class possible ; their manners were forward and impudent, their voices loud and nasal, and their talk most objectionable. Fortunately I could often hardly make out a word they said, for their mouths were always full of betel-nut, and their dialect was different from the Sarawak Malay, to which I was accustomed ; but when Mr. Innes and the Resident, or any other Englishmen, happened to be by, I used to hear them complain to each other that the talk of these Malay 'ladies' put them continually to the blush. Malays have no idea that there can be any subject in the world which should be tabooed in polite society—with

one exception only ; that is, *a man's wife*. It is not good manners in Malaya to ask a man how his wife is, or even to mention her. That subject is altogether too improper, or too insignificant. But in general they think if a thing exists, they may surely talk of it; and in talking of it, they use no round-about phrases : it would never occur to them to call a spade an agricultural implement.

The men are bad enough in this respect, but the women are infinitely worse ; and the first half-dozen questions which each female visitor in Langat used to ask me would make an English reader's hair stand on end with horror if I were to put them down here. On being snubbed they took refuge in silence for a time, but soon broke out into a tiresome catechism as to the price of everything in the room, especially the piano, or 'singing-box,' as they called it ; then they teased me to play on it ; then

they begged for everything they saw, including even such things as the clothes I had on, the photographs of my nearest relations, my watch, or the cups out of which they had just drunk coffee. I had unfortunately begun by wishing to be good-natured, and giving some of them the things they asked for, such as papers of needles, pins, reels of cotton, etc., and by playing a few tunes on the piano for them ; and found that in consequence I was expected to go on doing the same for the whole community for ever, as often as they chose to come and ask me. I knew that the proper reply to make to their begging, according to Malay etiquette, would be, 'Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to present you with what you desire ; but, alas ! it was given me by my dear grandmother on her death-bed,' or some similar fiction (the article in question

having perhaps just arrived from a co-operative store).

But I did not think myself bound to follow Malay customs, and did not wish to encourage the women to stay by being very polite to them. So I generally relapsed into silence, or said to Mr. Innes in English, 'I wish these horrid women would go ;' and though they professed not to know a word of our language this often had the desired effect. Probably they understood our looks, and saw they could get no more out of us. There was still an unpleasant ceremony to be gone through before getting finally rid of them—that was, shaking hands. Every Malay, man, woman, or child, who came to see us, insisted on shaking hands. It would have been sufficiently unpleasant to have to shake thirty clammy, not over clean hands in any case ; but, besides this, many of

them had horrible skin-diseases, and many of the children were blind of an eye, or deformed, or otherwise repulsive-looking, so that we did not enjoy the operation—in fact, we used, the instant their backs were turned, to fly to our rooms and wash our hands furiously, for fear of infection. After a time, I used to keep a pair of gloves always lying by me, and if I saw natives coming, hastily put them on. This had an excellent effect, and made them as anxious to avoid my hand as I theirs; for (as I found out accidentally) they fancied my gloves might be made of pig-skin, which they, being Mahometans, consider unclean.

The rajas' wives in Langat were hardly at all superior in manner or in intelligence to the common women just mentioned. They were just as intrusive and tiresome, and though very rich (which the common

women were not), they begged in a perfectly shameless manner. Their habit of begging (often for things of which they could not possibly have made any use) was so inveterate, and so utterly without reason, that I sometimes used to think they did not mean what they said, and only went through the form of asking for everything by way of a compliment to the owner. It is thought good manners in Malay circles to tell people that they are rich and fat, and to depreciate one's self by alleging that one is poor and thin. This, like all compliments, is not meant to be taken literally ; therefore it seems possible that the next step, of asking the supposed rich man for some of his property, is not meant literally either.

The women occasionally let out little facts concerning themselves which were interesting. Thus one day when the Datu

Dagang and his three young wives called to see me, the girls smilingly informed me they were all sisters to each other, and nieces to their husband. Knowing that the Malays are very apt to use the words sister, father, etc., in a figurative sense, I at first supposed they merely meant to imply that they all got on well together, and did not quarrel, as Malay co-wives too often do. But they, finding I did not quite understand them, called to the Datu Dagang, who was sitting apart with Mr. Innes, and asked him to explain. He did so, informing me that his elder brother, the father of these three girls, had owed him money, and could not pay ; so the Datu took first one daughter, then a second, and then a third to wife in settlement of the debt, letting the father go free.

The Datu seemed much pleased with himself while making this explanation, and

evidently expected me to admire him very much for having done a handsome thing. I asked humbly, feeling that I was displaying my ignorance, ‘A Malay gentleman, then, thinks nothing of marrying his three nieces?’ ‘Oh, well, I don’t know!’ said the Datu. ‘Perhaps it *was* a little unusual; but, you see, I did not want to be hard on my brother—poor fellow!’ He evidently thought he had made a bad bargain for himself, taking over such worthless articles as three young women in exchange for good hard cash; and probably he thought he had behaved remarkably well to them in making them wives instead of slaves, as the law of debt-slavery permitted.

There was a curious inequality in height between the men and the women of Langat. The men were not particularly short; some of them would have been accounted tall

even among Europeans ; but none of the women were much above four feet high. There was certainly not one in the whole district who reached the height of five feet. This fact is attributed, by those who have studied the subject, to their marrying and becoming mothers at too early an age.

After a short experience of the women of Langat, I was no longer surprised at the contempt lavished on them by their lords, nor at their prophet's verdict that women have no souls. But it is easy to see what has made them such as they are. They are not taught to read nor write ; they never travel out of their own country—nay, many a Malay woman never travels farther than from the house to the well and back ; and they cannot pick up knowledge even orally, for their mankind, on principle, avoid talking to them on any subjects but household matters, and what they are pleased to call

love. These subjects, it must be admitted, are not elevating; and if the Malay men lived the same narrow, base lives as the women, doubtless they would soon become as unintelligent. As it is they are not much better, which is only natural, for when one-half of the nation is steeped in ignorance and brutishness, the other half is not likely to escape contamination, nor to inherit talent, from them.

Finding that I could neither hope to learn anything from these women, nor to teach them anything (for their morals were, from all I could hear, quite past my mending, and the Government strictly forbade any attempt to introduce the Christian religion), I discouraged the visits of all except those of slightly superior rank, who announced their visits beforehand. These were very few in number. The wives of the Sultan and of his three sons—Rajas

Musa, Kahar, and Alang—were the only women in the village above the rank of slaves; and I was told by an old Malay that even these were not really wives, because they were not of equal birth with their lords.

In Malaya it would seem that a man, although he may be very much married as far as an abundance of wives and marriage ceremonies goes, is never irretrievably a Benedict so long as the brides are of an inferior rank to his own. He may always repudiate them, set aside the claims of their children, and marry again as often as he likes. But if, on the contrary, he choose to leave his estate and title to any of them, no one will object on the score of legitimacy. Whether this power of repudiation be also allowed to wives, I do not know—that is, whether a woman of high birth, having made a *mésalliance*, may lawfully undo it,

and be married over again to some more suitable partner ; but I should think it probably is so, as there are no more abject worshippers of rank in the world than the Malays, and their general principle seems to be that whatever is done by a raja or a princess is right.

The marriage laws of Malaya, like those of England, appear to have been made exclusively by the men and for the men's advantage, as they permit immense latitude to the husband and none to the wife in most cases ; but a princess, or woman of high birth, is regarded as a being belonging to another sphere altogether, and is not counted as one of the inferior sex. She is called Tuan, Tunku, or Tuanku (master, or my lord), without any indication of feminality or inferiority, and rules all the men about her with a rod of iron. How they reconcile their submission to her with

their theory that all women are the born slaves of men, I never understood, nor how it is that while the generality of Mahometan women are supposed to have no souls, and are not allowed to enter the mosque, yet certain of them have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and are called hajis, and treated with respect on that account.

Another inconsistency in the Malay fashion of treating women is that although the men profess to regard them in the abstract as creatures altogether too low and insignificant to be taken into account—even carrying this so far that it is considered impolite to mention a man's wife to him—yet, I was informed, there are no husbands in the world so henpecked as the Malay! This is, however, comprehensible. Debarred from all straightforward, legal influence, the Malay woman, like the white ant or the Jesuit, works in secret, and

obtains by listening behind curtains and other underhand practices the information which she is denied openly—information of which she often makes a powerful, even fatal use.

I have said that it is easy for a Malay husband to get rid of any wife if she be of birth inferior to his own ; but it is proportionately difficult, should she be of equal or superior birth. There was one instance of the latter kind in Langat in the case of Tunku Chi, the daughter of the Sultan, who had married Tunku Dia Udin, Viceroy of Selangor. This lady gave herself great airs on the strength of her pedigree. She could not get on with her husband, who had become a ‘civilized’ Malay—that is to say, he drank brandy. She having lived shut up and veiled in a Malay house all her life, was thoroughly Malay in her ways and customs ; her ideas, which were the nar-

rowest of the narrow, revolted against his, which, truth to tell, were not in all respects improved by contact with Europeans. They lived, we were told, a cat-and-dog life when together (which was seldom), and he would have much liked to divorce her, but could not, as she was the Sultan's daughter. So he sent her back to her father at Langat, where she tyrannized over the whole household.

The Tunku allowed her a certain sum for her maintenance, which sum was paid over to her monthly by Mr. Innes. He used to receive from Klang the money for that purpose, as also the money for the Sultan's and rajas' allowances, and for the police, boat-boys, etc., at the end of every calendar month, and used to pay them all on the first day of the following month. But this arrangement was incomprehensible to Tunku Chi. She sent her

messenger whenever there was a new moon, demanding her month's pay. Mr. Innes tried to explain to the messenger that the English have only twelve months in their calendar year, and that the new moon has nothing to do with the matter; but the messenger reported that Tunku Chi indignantly replied, 'Have I not eyes? Can I not see when there is a new moon? Will these meddling English alter the ways of the very sun and moon?' She then, like the princesses in the 'Arabian Nights,' fell upon the unfortunate messenger, and beat him severely—all which, though a big man, he took like a lamb—for was she not a princess?

Tunku Chi hated the English, very naturally, with all her heart; for she said it was they who had taught her husband to forsake the ways of his ancestors, to drink 'berendi' (brandy), and to wear a

mouthful of white teeth ‘like a dog,’ instead of filing and blackening them according to the good old Malay custom. She would never call on me, during the whole time of my stay at Langat ; nor afterwards, when she went to live at Klang, would she call on the Resident’s wife. But I called on her once with Mr. Innes and the Resident, and thus had an opportunity of seeing her. The Sultan and she were then living in a tumbledown wooden house at the Bandar, the dirt and untidiness of which could probably be only equalled in an Irish cabin. ‘Bandar’ means village, and at Langat this word was always used to designate the collection of houses in the swamp, in contradistinction to those on or near the hill.

We were received in a bare wooden shed, which was called the balei, or hall of audience. It was a square building, with

a tiled roof, a wooden floor, and a low wooden railing ; there was no furniture in it but a few well-worn mats and a European chair or two in very bad repair. Dirty brown and black children—Malays and Arabs—and mangy dogs swarmed around, but did not venture inside the wooden railing. In one of the chairs, which were all placed on a sort of dais inside the railing, was the Tunku Chi. She was a tolerably good-looking woman for a Malay, and was dressed rather like one of Raffaelle's Madonnas, with a gauze veil of emerald or 'arsenic' green, covered with gold spangles, falling half over her forehead ; to complete the likeness she had a small child in her arms. It is a curious fact that a certain shade of brilliant green is very becoming to the rich red-brown of the Malay complexion ; consequently, this colour is a great favourite with both men

and women, whether they be hajis or no.

Tunku Chi kept her eyes down, and looked the picture of modesty and gentleness during this interview ; but she was reputed to have the temper of a tigress. A story was told of her conduct afterwards in Klang, which is too picturesque and oriental to be omitted, though I do not vouch for its accuracy.

Tunku Chi, it appears, was peeping through the chink in the curtain which in Malay houses does duty for the European keyhole, and saw her lord, who was sitting with another raja, beckon to a slave-girl for a light for his cigarette. On receiving the light, the Tunku Dia Udin, or the other raja, or both, remarked aloud that the slave was a pretty girl. One version even credits Tunku Dia Udin with going so far as to tap the girl ap-

provably on the cheek. Be this as it may, the peeping wife grew pale with rage and jealousy, lay in wait for the girl as she left the room, and beat her furiously with a slipper.

The girl's screams were so violent that they attracted the attention of an English policeman who lived near. He came to inquire what was the matter, and on nearing the house found apathetic natives looking at 'streams of blood' that were dripping through the lantei (lath flooring) belonging to the Tunku's women's apartments. In reply to his questions, these natives told him the blood was that of a slave-girl whom Tunku Chi had been beating. Seeing the Tunku Dia Udin in the garden, the policeman went up to him, and, touching his cap, asked what were the shrieks that he had heard, and whether he could be of any use. The Tunku took the cigarette leisurely out of his mouth,

smiled sweetly, showing his pretty little teeth, and replied, with an *air vainqueur*, ‘It is nothing—only a little jealousy among the ladies !’

The policeman then mentioned the blood he had seen. This the Tunku assured him was only that of some fowls that were being prepared for his curry. As the shrieks had now ceased, and the policeman did not wish to insult the Tunku by showing open disbelief of his statements, or to outrage all Malay custom by forcing his way into the women’s apartment, he withdrew, but sent for the natives he had seen, and questioned them privately. They repeated their former statement, but declared that the slave-girl was not dead. The story goes on to say, however, that in a week’s time the girl *was* dead, having been quietly finished off and thrown into the river by the orders of Tunku Chi.

I have said that I do not vouch for the truth of this story, yet I certainly would not vouch for its falsehood. In the case of murder committed by an ordinary person, twenty Malay busybodies would have rushed to curry favour with the English superintendents of police by putting them on the scent ; but when the murderer was a princess, it was quite another thing—in fact, no Malay would have dared to tell, lest he should share the fate of the poor slave-girl. Such a possibility as Tunku Chi's being tried, condemned, and deported for murder, would never enter into a Malay's head—nor even an Englishman's—in Selangor ; for the State being only 'protected,' not annexed, by England, the Residents are constantly warned from Downing Street that they are there 'as advisers, and not as rulers ;' and besides, it would really have been rather hard on

poor Tunku Chi, who had not the slightest misgiving that she was doing anything wrong, and who could not be expected to imbibe suddenly and by instinct all the ways and opinions of two or three foreigners who had settled in her father's country.

In spite of Tunku Chi's ferocious temper, and in spite—or perhaps I should rather say in consequence—of her hatred of the English, and her unbending attitude of defiance and conservative views, I could not but respect and admire her. She was, I was told, one of the few respectable women in Langat, and altogether hers seemed to me a stronger character than that of either her husband or father. Had she been a man, or rather had she remained herself, but without the artificial disabilities imposed on her by the Malayan Mrs. Grundy, it is certain that the British

Government would never have been invited to 'protect' Selangor, and it is probable they would not have dared to come uninvited. Her life at Langat must have been a very dull one. She passed it in eating, drinking, sleeping, bathing, beating her servants, and, strange to say, cooking her own food. I was told that she never ate anything not cooked by herself. Whether this was from fear of poison, or from love of cooking, my informant could not say. She never went out for a walk, or took any outdoor exercise. Consequently, though quite young, she soon grew fat, unwieldy, and more and more ill-tempered day by day.

Malay men sometimes called on me. Their first question usually was, 'How is Queen Victoria? Are you any relation of hers? and have you heard from her lately?' This was, at any rate, a step in intelligence

above that of the women, who had never heard of any ruler in the world but the Sultan of Selangor and the petty local rajas. One of these rajas remarked to me one day that he would rather like to learn English, 'only,' he said, 'there is this objection to English, that it is only spoken by about a dozen people in the world, even counting the Governor of Singapore and his followers; while wherever you go—to the north, south, east, or west, or beyond the wind—you find Malay spoken.'

As he was rather more intelligent than the rest, and I thought it as well to let him know we were not quite so feeble a folk as he supposed, I showed him a map of the world, and pointed out the comparative sizes of the English-speaking and the Malay-speaking countries. I also informed him that all the Malays in Selangor were not so many as were contained

in one ordinary English town. He did not quite like this statement, and tried, I think, not to believe it. However, another day he not only asked to look at my map again, but brought a friend with him; this time they were evidently anxious to know what would be England's chances in a war with Russia, which the Malay newspaper mentioned as probable. They asked me whether it was not true that the land of Russia was much larger than the land of the English. I said, yes ; but that England was more thickly populated and had a longer purse ; therefore she was not in the least afraid of Russia. This argument seemed to please them, and they explained it to each other several times over, as their manner is when taking in a new idea ; then, taking their leave, they went off, probably to retail the information to their friends, and to tell them that in

case of war they had better stick to the richer nation.

I sometimes had the more civilized of the rajas in to afternoon tea if they happened to call at the right time for it, and was much amused with their ways—especially with one, the Tunku Panglima Raja. He was a very fine-looking old fellow, with large, bright, piercing eyes, a high forehead, and a good aquiline nose—not the flat, wide, fleshy snub usual with Malays. He was, in fact, not of pure Malay, but of Bugis extraction, I believe, as was also the Sultan. Tunku Panglima Raja wore a black silk handkerchief on his head, stiffened with rice-starch, and twisted into a tremendous erection, something like a bishop's mitre, but with the two ends sticking up like little horns on either side. The rest of his dress consisted of a jacket, buttoned only at the neck, and showing his brown skin from

thence to the waist, and a sarong, the twisted part of which was stuck full of krises, that gave him a warlike appearance.

His favourite beverage, I found, was not tea, but Bass's pale ale, which, however, he took in homeopathic doses. He would never have more than half a wineglass of it in one day ; but declared that that quantity did him a great deal of good as a pick-me-up when tired. He even joined us sometimes at luncheon, and apologized gracefully for eating with his fingers, saying he was an old man and could not learn new ways. He and I once had a little talk about the respective merits of fingers and forks, in which I confess he had rather the best of the argument.

'To tell the truth,' said he, 'we Malays do not care to eat with forks and spoons because we think it such a dirty practice. We say to ourselves, "What do I know of

the history of this fork? it has been in a hundred, perhaps a thousand mouths; perhaps even in the mouth of my worst enemy." This thought is very repulsive to us.'

'But, Tunku,' said I, 'the fork is thoroughly well cleaned, or ought to be, every time it is used, first with soap and hot water, then with plate-powder.'

'*Ought to be*; quite so,' said the Tunku. 'But how do you know that your servant does not shirk his work? If you have a lazy servant, you are liable to eat with a fork that has not been thoroughly cleaned. Whereas I know that my fingers are clean, for I wash them myself before eating. They are quite as clean as the cleanest fork, and they have two great advantages over it—one, that they have never been in anyone's mouth but my own; and another, that they are never lost, or mislaid, or stolen! They

are always at hand when one wants them.'

I was quite sorry when this poor raja got into disgrace with the Government for wrecking a ship that came too near his little bit of coast, and helping himself to its cargo. We had become on very friendly terms with him, and used often to receive little notes from him if he wanted any trifle, the penmanship being done not by himself, but his clerk. The following is a translation of one of these notes—not a particularly good specimen—but one that has accidentally lingered in my desk :

'This sincere and friendly epistle, with impatient longing, in which there is not a moment of forgetfulness or neglect, comes from me—Tunku Panglima Raja, son of the late Tunku Hussein, ruling in the district of Kanchong with prosperity.

‘ May the Lord of all worlds cause this to reach my graceful friend, Mr. J. Innes, Esquire, at this time at Langat, in the Bandar Termasa, with his glorious magnificence.

‘ Now I beg to announce to my friend in this letter that I want to borrow from my friend some of his paint-brushes—say three of them—because I want to paint my boat, and I hope my friend will give the brushes ; and if my friend does give the brushes, my friend can give them to the man who brings this letter. There is no other news except a thousand thousand salutations to my friend.

‘ Written on the third day of the month Dalkaidah, 1293.’

The first part of this note, as of all Malay letters, is called the *tirasol*, and is generally represented in translations by the words ‘after compliments.’ The *tirasol* is

long or short, in proportion to the dignity of the occasion and the amount of respect which the writer wishes to convey. The above is a particularly short one, the occasion being trifling. Mr. Innes sometimes received letters with enormously long tirasols, couched in extravagant language, which I should much have liked to keep as curiosities ; but they were official documents, and had to be kept among the official records. Among these were letters from sultans to each other, or to the Governor of Singapore ; these were always enclosed in an envelope made for the occasion of yellow silk or cambric (the royal colour), and were sometimes written throughout in letters of gold, which had a most gorgeous effect.

Another raja (Kahar) came to tea once or twice, but his manners were so extremely nasty that I was very glad when he came no more. He seemed very suspicious also,

as if he thought some treachery were intended. He took out an enormous knife or dagger from his petticoat before sitting down to tea, and laid it on the table close to his right hand, with an air I, fancied, as who should say, ‘ You see I am armed.’

He would not have any milk in his tea, telling me he had heard that the condensed milk—which we were obliged to use, there being no milch-cows in Langat — was really pigs’ milk, an abomination to Mahometans. I assured him it was not so, and showed him the picture of a cow on the tin, to which he replied with a knowing look, ‘ Are you quite sure there is no cheating in your country?’—a question which I pretended not to hear.

He then proceeded to cut his bread-and-butter and his toe-nails alternately with his knife, sitting with his foot in his hand for the purpose; and, having finished his tea,

made the most horrible noises in his throat by way of intimating that he had enjoyed the meal. I consoled myself for having to endure this by reflecting philosophically that the Malay code of manners is different from ours, and that I was probably shocking him all the time by sitting unveiled in his presence as much as he shocked me by his want of refinement. He wore nothing at all but a sarong, except a handkerchief on his head.

CHAPTER V.

MALAY DRESS.

HE dress of Malays, both men and women, is neither picturesque nor convenient. The sarong, common to both sexes, is a long narrow petticoat of dingy red, not gathered into any band, but put on by being pulled as tight and scanty as possible at the back, while it is twisted by the hand into an ungainly fulness in front. Over this goes, for the women, the kabaya—a long jacket with loose sleeves ; it is very shapeless, and is made up with more regard to economizing the material than to a handsome appearance,

the seams being allowed to come anywhere, according to the size of the individual as compared with the width of the cloth. Another sarong is then thrown over the head and shoulders by the common women as a veil, and when in the presence of men, this is drawn up over the face till only a narrow slit is left open for the eyes. This headdress must be stiflingly hot, as the sarongs are made of stout material, cotton or silk, but the women do not seem to mind the heat.

Women of a superior class generally wear veils of cambric, muslin, or figured net—in the last case looking to our English eyes as if they had brought away part of the window-curtains by mistake. The rajas' wives on a visit of ceremony are adorned with diamonds, but you have to look very close before you observe the diamonds, as the general effect of their

toilette is extremely dingy and shabby. Some of the children, however, were beautifully dressed, their little fat necks, arms, and legs being encircled by rows of brightly coloured and golden beads, and their little turbans and robes being of silk or fine muslin.

The women with their numerous draperies look, when fully dressed, like shapeless bundles of clothes. Very few of them have the smallest pretension to good looks. There was only one in the Bandar whom we thought pretty—a girl called Rokia. As a rule their noses were flat and broad, with distended nostrils, their mouths wide and thick lipped, their teeth filed to a point and blackened; while a horrible crimson stream oozing slowly out of the mouth, and a huge lump bulging out one cheek, betrayed that the fair owner was chewing betel-nut. Their eyes were often

large, soft, and beautiful, but this effect was obtained, they told me, partly by artificial colouring on the eyelids.

In the case of the men, the sarong is worn down to the heels or up to the knees, according to the taste and fancy of the wearer. The twisting of the sarong in such a manner as to keep it safe and tight for any length of time seems to be an art unattainable even by Malays, still more by Europeans, some of whom adopt this dress ; consequently it has to be readjusted on an average every five minutes. If any work requires to be done suddenly by anyone wearing a sarong, he spends several minutes in tucking it up before he can move, thus inevitably recalling the ‘girding up of the loins’ spoken of in the Old Testament in similar circumstances.

This foolish dress is perhaps the reason why Malays hardly ever do any work ; or

perhaps the fact of their doing no work is the reason why they wear so foolish a dress. It is impossible to say which is cause and which is effect ; but that sarongs and activity are incompatible I am quite convinced. A Malay woman can never use more than one hand at a time for anything, the other being always occupied in keeping her clothes on.

After being at Langat some time, I took to keeping fowls. I knew nothing, when I began, about their habits ; but they, soon discovering that, taught me in an unmistakable manner what they would and would not put up with.

I set up first six hens, then increased them to twenty, and latterly kept about 150 head of poultry in all, including ducks and young ones. I called my hens by names, in order to know them apart, and rushed out at all hours of the day, regard-

less of sunstroke, whenever I heard a cackle. This was quite necessary, unless I wished to lose all the eggs. *Who* took them I never could find out ; but unless I was in the hen-house within half a minute of the first triumphal note the egg was gone.

Even then I was sometimes too late. There were three Indian road-coolies often employed in clearing out the ditches, which were supposed to drain the land on which our house stood ; and whenever they were about, my hens might cackle themselves white in the comb, but no eggs were to be found. This could hardly be a mere coincidence, as it happened too often. As I rushed into the hen-house, I sometimes met one of these men sauntering out of it, apparently engaged in wiping his spade, or some other harmless occupation ; his dress was so scanty, consisting merely of a scrap

of calico, that it seemed impossible anything could be concealed in it; but probably he had some clever way of holding eggs in his mouth or in his arm-pit, like the Indian jugglers.

When I increased my stock of poultry, I became hard up for names, and took to calling the fowls after my friends and acquaintances in Singapore and Sarawak. I tried not to let the cook (a sharp little Malay called Taip, who had been with us in both places) overhear these names; but he somehow picked them up, and would gravely say to me, ‘Tuan S—— is getting very fat; will you have him for dinner to-day?’ or, ‘Would you like Mem B—— boiled or curried?’ This frightened (while it amused) Mr. Innes and myself, lest some day Taip should come out with these names before English visitors, who would be sure to know the originals, or might even be

the originals themselves ; so after that I called the fowls after their colours or peculiarities.

My hens were certainly a great amusement to me. I fancy they had much more originality of character than the English farmyard poultry, descended from a long line of comfortable, fat, commonplace ancestry. My hens were but a generation or two removed from the wild jungle-fowl, which is a native of the Malay country. My young chickens were as strong on the wing as sparrows, and would have flown from tree to tree like them, I am sure, had there been any trees ; as it was, they flew from the top of the kitchen to the top of our house, and from thence to the hen-house, all day long, followed by the more active of their mammas. These mammas were terribly intelligent. It was useless for me to attempt to deceive them by nest-

eggs, or any of the common subterfuges of hen-wives ; they appeared to count their eggs carefully every day, and to be able by sniffing at them to identify them. The disappearance of one egg daily from each nest was all they would put up with—this they probably set down as the inevitable ‘commission’ levied by snakes, etc. ; but if I ventured to take all but one, as is often done in England, they would desert the nest.

Their ruling passion was for laying in the most unsuitable place they could find. Our house being more unsuitable than the hen-house, they naturally elected to lay in it ; and the pigeon-holes for official papers in Mr. Innes’s office, being on the whole *the* most inconvenient place in which to deposit eggs and bring up a family of chickens, were generally fixed on. It was in vain that, on hearing a sound of papers being

scratched and flung about, Mr. Innes would hunt out the intruder, and send her flying, with perhaps a shoe after her. A Malay hen when she has once taken a fancy to a place is not easily deterred from it ; she will come back and back again twenty times, and nothing short of shutting her up in a box until the wretched little egg that has been the cause of all the fuss is laid will ensure peace and quietness. Even then it is only peace from that one hen for that one day. On the morrow all the trouble has to be gone through again, for she has only laid in the box from compulsion, not conviction, and she takes care to let you know her opinions are unchanged by reverting to the pigeon-hole at every opportunity until once more caught and imprisoned. On the third day she will (if not a *very* obstinate hen) go of her own accord to the box, and if she finds there

her two fresh eggs (no others will do), there is no more trouble with her for that particular sitting ; but in the meantime probably some of the other hens have taken the pigeon-hole mania in their turn, so there is never any peace.

From the house being so open there is no way of putting a stop to this nuisance except by shutting up the hens; consequently by the middle of each day the greater part of them had been caught in the various work-baskets, pails, beds, hats, bookshelves, or other retreats they had chosen, and were dreeing their weird in a corresponding number of old boxes in the hen-house. Poor things ! I believe one of their reasons for preferring our house was that it was swept out every day, and therefore was freer from centipedes, snakes, scorpions, and so forth, than the hen-house ; not to mention such daring robbers as the

musang, which thinks nothing of seizing the largest fowl by the neck and carrying it off bodily.

During this first year we had frequent visits from the Resident. He came at irregular intervals, sometimes two or three times in a week, while sometimes a whole fortnight would elapse without our seeing anything of him. At first he always dropped down on us in the middle of the night, and we used to get up and clothe ourselves hurriedly on hearing the whistle of his steam-launch, fancying all sorts of horrors, from a Malay outbreak to a Governor's visit, might have occurred; but we soon found it was 'only his way,' and he had nothing particular to tell us. If he brought a mail for us we gladly forgave him for disturbing our night's rest; but if it turned out, as it too often did, that our mail and our stores had been left behind

through carelessness, we did not bless him, nor the set of hungry men, from two to five in number, who generally accompanied him, and who wanted food, baths, beds, and mosquito-curtains got ready for them at a moment's notice by our sleepy servants. 'Wanted,' I say; I do not say that they always got them; for the house was by no means well found in all these respects, for reasons to be mentioned hereafter.

When the snipe season set in, his visits were timed at a more convenient hour, as he liked to shoot in the comparative cool of the afternoon, between five and six. The sound of a shrill steam-whistle was the first indication to us that guests might be expected, and that in about five minutes more they would be in the house. During those five minutes an absurd scene generally took place. I issued hasty directions to Taip the cook and Apat the 'boy' as to which of the

fowls they were to catch and hold in readiness until we knew how many men the Resident had brought with him. Then ensued a tremendous chasing, fluttering, screaming, and squawking below the house ; then Taip would reappear, hot and out of breath, with perhaps the wrong fowls in his hands.

‘ Why, Taip, what is this ? you have brought Miss Brown and Major Grey instead of the two young Master Blacks ; and why have you caught Lady Sitwell ?’*

‘ Please, mem, she has been as usual sitting on a bad egg for six weeks ; and the two young Master Blacks don’t want to be killed ; when I began to chase them they went off to the jungle for the day, and will not be back till to-morrow.’

‘ Oh, nonsense, Taip ! I cannot have you

* Named after the ‘most sedentary of Baronets,’ as Sydney Smith called him, on account of her habit of sitting for ever on addled eggs.

killing all the hens, so go and get "The Fittest" instead.'

This last was a chicken so called because it was a striking instance of the survival of the Fittest, all its brothers and sisters having died young from different causes.

In the midst of the noise Mr. Innes, who had gone to meet the visitors, reappeared with them. If they were old *habitués* of Langat they generally went straight off to shoot ; but if, as did happen sometimes, though very seldom, they were strangers, and of a superior class, they thought it their duty to sit down a few minutes, and make polite small-talk to me, like callers in England. While we were all thus playing at being civilized, it was somewhat trying to our gravity to hear and see the materials for dinner being caught below and around the house ; for my fowls were so intelligent that it took our servants all

they knew to catch them in open daylight, and often the boat-boys and police joined in the chase for fun, so that the noise was terrific.

When Mr. Innes and the Resident and his friends had gone off to shoot, I had leisure to ransack my store-room, and wonder what on earth I should give them to eat, besides the fowls already spoken of. If we happened to have just lately received a box of stores and drinkables from Singapore my heart was light, and I had no anxiety; but if not, it was a case of being expected to make bricks without straw. It became more and more difficult as time went on to provide dinners from the resources of Langat itself.

When we first went there, there was a large flock of geese belonging to a Chinaman, upon which I could always draw in an emergency; but these emergencies happened so often that soon the whole

flock was eaten, and we could get no more. I then said to the Chinaman, ‘ Why have you no more geese ? ’ He replied that his usual way of getting geese was by allowing them to lay eggs, and bring up their goslings, but that we had eaten up all the mothers, so how could we expect them to have young geese ? There seemed to be something in this argument ; but I suggested that he might buy some full-grown ones at Malacca, and trust to my taking them off his hands one by one as I had done the rest. He promised to do so, but never performed his promise, as he died shortly afterwards, and no other Chinaman was enterprising enough to take up the goose business. We did not care to keep a stock of geese ourselves, as the noise they would have made below the house would have been unendurable. Occasionally we bought fish from the natives ;

but the river-fish were so muddy, we did not care to eat them, while the sea-fish were generally rather high by the time they reached the Bandar.

A housekeeper who set nothing but fowls before her guests was not thought to be treating them well. The fowls were very small, and were made more tasteless than they need have been by a lazy practice which the cooks had of steeping them in hot water until the feathers fell off. This was no doubt a quicker and easier way of getting rid of the feathers than plucking ; but during the process all the flavour was lost before the actual cooking began, and by the time the bird came to table there was no more taste in it than in a piece of white boiled wood.

My fowls were a good deal larger and better than those to be bought in the village ; but in order to supply our table

all the year round, I should have had to keep enormous numbers of them, as we consumed on an average about one and a half per day. The process of buying in the village was as follows. First you had to decide in your own mind which were the least skinny of the fowls you saw running about in the gutter; then by careful inquiry to find out the owner of a particular fowl, haggle with him for its price, and finally help him to catch it. If you wanted several fowls, this process had to be gone through with each one, probably with a different owner each time, as the fowls of all the village herded promiscuously together. It will be seen that buying fowls in Langat was a work of time. However, the bazaar fowls had one advantage — the preliminaries of buying them being over, they were very easily caught; for they were so starved that a

handful of rice scattered in front of them made them go quite off their heads with joy, and become deaf and blind to all else.

Notwithstanding their emaciated condition they were by no means cheap, for the owners took advantage of my evident necessity to raise the price on me. They knew that I never bought 'scavenger' fowls, unless my store-room was empty and my own hen-roost exhausted; so as it was clear that I *must* buy, whatever the cost, they sold their fowls, as Becky Sharp sold her horses after Quatre Bras, at fabulous prices as a great favour.

Bottles of brandy and of soda-water might be had from the spirit-farm on the same terms. These I often had to buy in Langat, as my Singapore stock was always running out, for in this 'thirsty country' men naturally required stimulants after wading knee-deep in a swamp for an hour in a

tropical sun. Beer I never bought but once in the Langat bazaar. On that occasion the proud owner showed us his one pint bottle, boasting that he had had it by him a long time, and telling us all the history of how he came by it. He begged us to buy it, which we were foolish enough to do, at a price rather higher than that which in England would have bought the same quantity of champagne. Of course it had to be thrown away.

The price of everything, by the time it reached Langat, was often quite double what it would have been in a civilized country. There were three freights to be paid on it: one from Singapore to Malacca, one from Malacca to Klang, and one—the heaviest of all—from Klang to Langat by native boat. This last was sometimes, and might always have been, saved us by the Resident bringing our stores in the steam-

launch. This vessel was originally intended by Government for Langat, and had been devoted solely to the use of our predecessor at Langat; but the Resident had adopted it for his own personal use just before our arrival, and facetiously called it his 'private carriage.'

The men whom the Resident usually brought with him were generally Scotch engineers of small coasting steamers, half-caste apothecaries or accountants, etc., or English policemen of the rough-and-ready order, whose 'arts' were in the right place, according to their own account, but whose *h's* were decidedly in the wrong. One of these, who constantly acted as interpreter for the Resident, infected all the Malay rajas in the country, so that they began to talk and write of Tuan Hinnes and the Hoffice in the Arabic character. Another could never say simply 'to do a thing ;' it was

always ‘for-to-come-for-to-go-for-to-do such a thing.’ It was quite fatiguing to think of anyone’s voluntarily giving himself so much extra labour as this in so hot a climate.

One day, not long after our arrival, we made a trip by boat to the hill of Jugra, at which we had till then only gazed from the village or Bandar. The river here was obstructed by partly submerged trees in full leaf which stood upright in mid-stream, and danced up and down with the current. This had a most curious effect, and made the navigation difficult. The cause of it was the continual widening of the river by the encroachments of the tide. Almost every time we passed we noticed that fresh bits of the banks had fallen in, and fresh trees had taken up their position in the water. The natives used to declare that the river of Jugra was widening so rapidly that in a few years it would be an arm of

the sea. Many of them said they could recollect the time when it had been a tiny ditch, and that not so very long ago. Now, it was wide enough everywhere, and deep enough in most places, to let the largest steamers go up it as far as Langat ; but the commanders of large vessels did not care to take them up, on account partly of the sand-bar at the mouth, and partly of the snags and half-submerged trees already mentioned.

As we drew near the hill we were delighted with the beauty of the scene. The river was bordered on both sides by the light-green foliage of the mangrove-trees, while towering above them to the left was Jugra hill, well wooded to the top, with trees of every possible tint. As there are no differences of season so near the equatorial line, there is always a great variety of colour in a Malay forest. Each

tree sheds its leaves at the time that best suits its own convenience, without regard to its neighbours ; therefore you have spring, summer, and autumn tints all at once, and side by side, though possibly the trees may be of the same species. Of the wintry leafless stage no specimens are visible except on close examination, for the others generously subscribe some of their own exuberant foliage to clothe the poor bare skeleton and hide it from sight. One side of the hill was lit up by the setting sun, the other loomed grandly in rich blue-black shadow.

We were rowed round to the landing-place—a large rock, which the natives called ‘The Stone,’ as it was the only stone known in the country at that time, though a vein of granite was afterwards discovered running through the hill. This stonelessness would have been a trial, no doubt, to the

little boys of Langat if they had not been brought up to know no happier state of things. It seemed very strange to me at first, when I wanted some one to throw stones at the Sultan's buffaloes, in order to drive them out of our enclosure, and found that not only there was not such a thing as a small stone to be had for love or money, but that literally the Malay boys had never seen one in their lives, and did not know what I meant. The explanation was that the whole district was pure mud and swamp, and they had never lived anywhere else.

We walked a little way round the hill, but the jungle was so thick it was impossible to proceed, so we returned to the Bandar, talking much of the day, which we hoped was not far distant, when the Government would fulfil its promise of allowing us to build a bungalow at Jugra,

instead of our present wigwam in the swamp.

This promise in the meantime did us harm rather than good, as it prevented us from making ourselves comfortable where we were. Had we known from the first that we should be two years at the Bandar, we should at once have begun to make sufficient garden, by draining and enriching the soil, to grow a few flowers and vegetables ; and we might also have started a lawn-tennis ground by fencing out the Sultan's buffaloes, which were allowed to go wild in the swamp. As it was, we constantly expected to hear that we were to be moved to the hill, and therefore abstained from asking for the money necessary for temporary improvements. We were, in short, young in the ways of Governments, and did not understand that the word 'immediately' in the Government language meant two weary years.

We often made trips to the hill at this time, but usually only called on the Sultan, and then returned at once to our boat, as there was no path except the one leading from the river's brink to his house. One day, however, Mr. Innes proposed that we should try to walk from the hill to the Bandar by land. The distance was supposed to be about four miles, and the only time available for the walk, without imminent danger of sunstroke, was an hour and a half before sunset, namely, from half-past four to six. There had long been talk of making a path from the Bandar to the hill, and some months before, a surveyor had been sent to Langat to survey the ground and estimate the cost of the work. Mr. Innes had been over the ground with him, and told me he was sure I could do the walking easily. He forgot that when Mr. Leech and he had done it, it was at the

end of the dry season ; now it was just after the end of the wet, which made all the difference.

We started from the Sultan's house at about half-past four one afternoon. The first bit of the way was easy enough, as there were several Malay wigwams scattered about, and consequently paths that led from one to the other. Then we reached a swampy bit of ground, where we had to walk in single file through tall grass about eight or nine feet high, two natives who accompanied us clearing a path for us as they went along in front.

Having come to an end of the grass, we now saw before us a belt of trees through which a clearing of a hundred yards in width had been made by the surveyor's orders. But the clearing of the trees had been done in such a manner that it was far from facilitating our progress. They lay

pell-mell in all directions, just as they had happened to fall. The Malay woodcutters who felled them had not given themselves the trouble to clear a path ; and instead of there being firm dried mud underneath one's feet, as had been the case when Mr. Leech and Mr. Innes tracked out the route, there was now a sheet of muddy, prismatic water, over which the large branches of the trees formed a kind of network, while the trunks lay, some in the water, some out, the last being supported by those below. Mr. Innes, luckily for him, was in knicker-bockers, long stockings, and thick boots, so he waded through the water, ducking his head down now and then to avoid the trees.

The natives kilted their petticoats up to their knees and also waded ; but as for poor me, I was attired in the idiotic frilled skirts of Europe, and had nothing for it but to climb

on the recumbent trees, and walk from one branch to another. If the branches had only been as solid as they looked, I could have managed pretty well ; but alas ! since they had been felled many months had elapsed, and what with the white ants first and then the rainy season, many of them were mere shells, though they looked exactly like the rest. There was nothing left of them but the bark, which was untouched ; and when I jumped upon them they gave way with me, and I fell into the water beneath.

This happened continually. My skirts became fearfully heavy with the water and mud, and clung to me, weighing me down and pulling me back. The natives came to my assistance ; as for Mr. Innes, he was getting alarmed at the position of affairs, and went on ahead to see how far this sort of road was going to last. We were, he

believed, only about half-way home ; daylight was already gone, and the short twilight was closing in. He strongly suspected that we had lost our way, and knew that as soon as it was quite dark, it would be hopeless to find it, for the natives, who had professed to guide us, were evidently as ignorant as we. The thought of spending a night wandering about in a swamp was not pleasant, even putting the chance of tigers out of the question.

At last we came to an end of the felled trees, and then found the same kind of tall grass as before, but with a much swamplier soil. Each time I put my foot down, it went in up to the knee in mud ; this was very fatiguing. The natives as usual were kindness itself. Mr. Innes in his impatience to get on had seized a parang from one of them, and was chopping the way, right and left, through the grass. The two natives,

therefore, devoted themselves to me, and almost carried me along between them.

It was now pitch-dark, and Mr. Innes kept on calling to us in an anxious tone to make haste. But it was of no use. Weighted with clothing and mud about the ankles to the extent, I am sure, of many pounds, and tired out with all the previous scrambling, jumping, and repeated falls into the water, I made but slow progress. I felt also much disheartened at the thought that none of the party knew the way, and that probably we were wandering round in a circle, as travellers lost in the bush are supposed invariably to do. We plodded painfully on, and I was just announcing that I really could not stir a step farther, I was so tired, when we heard a sound that surprised us. It was the report of a gun ! We could not think what this could be. Some one

shooting snipe? No; it was dark—impossible! Or shooting tigers? Natives, we knew, never went out to shoot tigers. Anyhow, whoever it might be, and on whatever errand bent, we thought we had better let them know we were there, for fear they might shoot us by mistake. So we all lifted up our voices and shouted. Another shot was heard, and then another, always coming nearer; and each time we shouted in reply. At last our shouts were answered by human voices; and, to our great relief, little Sergeant Mat, from the Bandar, with two or three policemen and some lighted torches, pushed through the grass, expressing great delight at having found us.

It turned out that the boatmen whom we had dismissed at the hill had mentioned in the village our intention of walking home, and Sergeant Mat finding we did

not return before dark, thought he had better come to look for us. It was really fortunate for us that he did so, as I do not think we should have found our way home that night but for him. He soon brought us out of the swamp on to comparatively firm ground, and I got home without further trouble, but was stone-deaf for a day and a half after the affair. This depressed me very much, as I feared I should be so for the rest of my life. After thirty-six hours a violent buzzing and singing in the ears came on, which alarmed me more than ever, for I felt that if *that* was going to be permanent it would simply drive me mad ; but it proved to be the beginning of the end of my deafness, for first one ear, and two days afterwards the other, recovered its hearing.

The story of our jungle-walk, we found, had spread in Langat, and the rajas, in-

cluding the Sultan, all chaffed us about what they evidently considered a mad freak. Mr. Leech, when told by Mr. Innes that I had gone over the same ground that he had surveyed, professed not to believe it. Yet it was in a far worse condition when I went there than when he saw it; for the felling of the trees and the deluge of rain had both taken place since then. In fact, I believe that had it not been for these two circumstances, and for my being so heavily handicapped by my clothing, I should have found no great difficulty in the walk.

One great advantage that the hill possessed over the swamp was its water. All over the hill there were tiny streamlets and rills of beautiful fresh water, while at the Bandar it was brackish and foul, being derived from the river, which was only four and a half miles from the sea at that

point. We had a water-boat allowed us by Government, which went almost daily to the hill to fetch us our drinking water, so that we never drank the water of the swamp; but those of the Malays who were too poor to possess a boat, or too lazy to take the trouble of fetching water from the hill, drank out of the ditches.

This was the primary cause, I believe, of a terrible epidemic of cholera which broke out about a year after our arrival. There was first a drought that lasted many days, perhaps even as long as a fortnight. This was most unusual, and every living thing felt oppressed by the heat. The ditches dried up, and even the swamp itself became firm ground, full of gaping cracks. We heard a few complaints of want of water, and did what we could for the poor by sending the water-boat to and from the hill all day for them. The rajas did the same;

and as the Malays are a very amphibious race and the rivers are the highways of the country, there were in reality very few who possessed no boats of their own. But there were apparently many of them who had either never heard that bad water was unwholesome, or else did not believe it. One day we met a small boy carrying a bottle that contained a fluid in appearance like muddy beer ; this he said was drinking-water that he had been sent to look for in the ditches, and was taking home. This sort of thing had probably gone on for some time, and much more extensively than we knew of.

Another consequence of the drought was that the village became extremely dirty. The Malays rely very greatly on the storms of rain for cleansing their streets and habitations. Their usual way of getting rid of kitchen-refuse, vegetable or animal, is to open

a hole in the lath flooring of their house, and to pour the refuse down through it. In ordinary weather the heap thus accumulated is washed away by the first regular downpour that occurs; but in a drought the durian skins, vegetable stalks, refuse of fish and fowls, etc., etc., all fester together in one horrid putrid mass without the inhabitants of the house ever taking the trouble to clear it away, unless when the mosquitoes are unusually troublesome; then they light a fire under the house, and use the heap of nastiness as fuel.

CHAPTER VI.

CHOLERA AND TIGERS.

oon, as was to be expected, we began to hear of deaths from cholera. The way in which these deaths were discovered was very horrible. The police used to come in and say, ‘Tuan, we believe that in such and such a house there is some one dead, as there is a putrid smell coming from it; will you give us orders to go and see?’ Mr. Innes then went with them himself to the wig-wam indicated, and invariably found a corpse many days old in a fearful condition; in most cases the surviving inhabitants of

the house had fled panic-stricken into the jungle without making any attempt to bury their dead ; but in one case—that of the very next house to ours, only separated from us by about fifty yards of swamp—he found an old woman cooking her rice quite unconcerned, in the same room with a dead body in such a state that it alone seemed enough to breed a pestilence. Mr. Innes rebuked the old woman for not letting anyone know of the death. She replied, ‘I have no money for funeral expenses.’ ‘Why did you not tell the police, then ?’ The old woman stared ; it was quite a new idea to her that the police would help her, for the police themselves were a comparatively new and not very popular institution in Langat, and the people were apt to look on them as spies of the Government and natural enemies to themselves.

They were in reality admirable fellows a

a pinch of this kind, and all the better for not having European sanitary notions in their heads ; at a word from Mr. Innes they dug a grave then and there in the hot sun, and buried the corpse, at the imminent risk of losing their own lives from sunstroke, to say nothing of the chances of infection or contagion. Fortunately, neither they nor Mr. Innes suffered from their exertions among the dead and dying. If they had fallen ill, no medical help could have been obtained in time, for this Asiatic cholera was usually only an affair of three hours from the date of the first symptom until all was over ; while it took three days at least to get an answer from Klang by native boat (the only means of communication we possessed). There was not even a medicine-chest in Langat, the one intended for us by Government having been 'annexed' on its way to us.

While the epidemic was still at its height, I began to notice certain processions which passed every day through the bazaar and wound towards the river. A great number of Malays in their best dresses appeared to be carrying something, and as they walked slowly along they beat gandangs (tom-toms) and chanted. Inchi Simun, an intelligent old Malay, happened to be calling on me one day when the procession was passing, so I asked him what it meant. He replied that the Tunku Muda, or heir-apparent, the Sultan's eldest son, and a bigoted Mahometan, was offering up prayers to Allah that the plague might be stayed. I asked how many people were dead. He said about fifty. This was an enormous percentage, as I do not suppose the whole Bandar, including the outlying 'ladangs' (plantations) had ever contained more than 150 people. I expressed sorrow at hear-

ing of such a number, and then asked what were the Malays carrying in procession ? After much hesitation Inchi Simun replied, two effigies of evil spirits which the Raja Muda and the Imaum were going to cast into the river ; if the effigies sank, Heaven would be considered to have refused the offering ; if, on the contrary, they floated away, so would the cholera depart from Langat.

Inchi Simun then, in a sudden gush of confidence, informed me in a mysterious whisper that the Tunku Muda proclaimed every day to the people that Allah was sending the pestilence to punish them for allowing heretics to remain in the country. A thought now struck me, and I asked if the effigies represented Mr. Innes and myself—or perhaps the Resident ? This, Inchi Simun denied, but rather faintly. I then suggested that if Tuhan Allah really

wished the white heretics removed out of the country, it was surely a strange and roundabout way to effect it by killing one-third of the faithful ; would it not be much simpler and more just to kill the white men themselves ?

'But,' I added, 'you never see white men die of cholera, or very seldom. When they do, it is because they have lived near some dirty Malay house, or drunk some dirty ditch-water, as you Malays are so fond of doing. The Tunku Muda does not understand aright the lesson that Allah is teaching you all. He is teaching you that you are abominably lazy. You expect Heaven to clean below your houses for you. Heaven has done it for you often—just to show you how—and now wishes to teach you to do it for yourselves. As you are not quick at understanding Heaven's ways, and require your lesson to be told you in

words, Heaven has sent Mr. Innes and me here to tell it you. I therefore tell you that it would be far more to the purpose if the Tunku Muda would cease his prayers and processions and order the whole of the village to be properly cleaned. He should also order that no one, under pain of his displeasure, should drink any water except from the hill. Then he would really be doing the will of Heaven, and would soon be rewarded by seeing the cholera depart.' Inchi Simun seemed rather struck by this new view of things. I do not know whether he repeated what I had said to the Tunku, but shortly afterwards the epidemic, having run its course, abated.

The Tunku Panglima Raja I found had a different theory as to the cause of the cholera, from both the Tunku Musa's and mine. He gravely told us, 'Allah sends droughts in places where some one is living a

notoriously evil life, and if the wicked person be killed, immediately rain will come.'

This Tunku Muda, or Musa,* was a man of a singular character for a Malay. He was generally thought by his countrymen to be mad, but was admired and revered by them on that account. As we came to know him better we did not think him at all mad, but could quite understand why the Malays did. He constantly worked with his own hands, instead of ordering his slaves to work. We saw him from our window one day pulling down a house which he wished to have rebuilt. He was doing all the work himself in the hot sun, while about twenty of his followers looked on. This conduct was very comprehensible to us, for we had often found it less

* Tunku Muda was his title, while Musa (Moses) was his name. Tunku Muda means, literally, 'My young lord,' and is always used to signify 'heir-apparent.'

trouble to do a thing ourselves than to direct the incompetent, half-hearted efforts of the natives ; but, according to the Malay way of thinking, anyone who does work which he is not absolutely forced to do *must* be mad.

The Tunku Muda's 'madness' resulted in his turning part of the unprofitable swamp, hitherto trodden into a pulp by buffaloes, into a flourishing grove of coco-palms ; another part became a tobacco plantation under the touch of his 'insane' fingers, and the rest, with his usual eccentricity, he converted into numerous well-irrigated padi-fields. In short, where everybody had declared nothing could grow on account of the salt-water, he fenced, drained, dug, and planted, till by dint of perseverance and energy, a literally howling wilderness (for there were plenty of tigers about) had become a smiling and

fruitful estate. Had there been a few more such madmen among the Malays it would have been well for the country. We had an opportunity of seeing him at work day by day for years when we walked on the mud-path, so that the transformation of the land actually took place under our own eyes.

Mr. Innes soon conceived so high an opinion of this raja that he proposed him as magistrate instead of Raja Kahar, who lived at an inconvenient distance up the country. The Raja Muda was pleased at this compliment, which had up to that time been denied him (though the Sultan's eldest son) because he was generally thought to be a 'sulky fanatic,' and hostile towards the English ; and the friendly feeling between us and him increased until we grew to consider him as one of the main props of the Government. Some of his decisions in court, however, were so severe

that Mr. Innes began to regret having recommended him as magistrate. No harm was done when Mr. Innes was also present on the Bench, as then the Tunku contented himself with approving whatever the Tuan ruled ; but sometimes, when Mr. Innes was absent, the Tunku used to decide cases alone.

The first time this happened, I was sitting in my room, and the palm-leaf partition that divided it from the Court-room being full of holes, I could see and hear distinctly all that went on. For stealing a small quantity of rice, value one shilling and sixpence, the Tunku gave a man six months' hard labour in chains. The natives in court looked amazed, for stealing comes as naturally to Malays as breathing ; whereupon the Tunku sprang to his feet, and, lifting his hand to Heaven, exclaimed that Allah's command was, if a man stole, both his hands and his feet should be cut off !

He certainly looked a wild figure as he said it.

Mr. Innes, on hearing of this sentence, did not like to reverse it at once, lest the Tunku should feel himself shamed before his countrymen, but he contrived to be present next time there were cases to be tried, and to temper the Tunku's ideas of justice with a little European mercy. I believe he suggested to the Tunku, that if the 'divine' law he had quoted were strictly carried out, there would be hardly anyone left in Langat with the proper complement of hands and feet, and that the result might be inconvenient. As for the poor man who stole the rice, he was let go on some pretext after he had worked out a small part of his sentence.

The Tunku Muda had a charming little son, Raja Sleman, or Solomon, by name, a bright, gentle-mannered and amiable boy

of about eleven, who could both read and write Malay fluently—a most unusual accomplishment with Malays of rank. As a rule, a raja of the old style would no more wish to write his own letters than to cook his own rice ; he considers it the proper work of the clerk, and unworthy of a gentleman ; and it was one more proof of the Tunku Muda's being in advance of his age, that he had conquered this prejudice and allowed his little son to be taught.

My being able to write was a never-ending source of amazement to those of the natives who had not visited Singapore ; if they saw me writing a letter, a crowd soon collected round me, uttering delighted exclamations of ‘ Wah ! ’ and ‘ Amboi ! ’ exactly as an English crowd of rustics might exclaim at the performances of a learned pig, or other intelligent quadruped. They were greatly astonished when I told them that all

Englishwomen could write, from Queen Victoria downwards; and I fear they did not think quite so highly of her most gracious Majesty in consequence, though I explained that she had plenty of servants to write for her if she wished.

It is difficult for so conservative a people as the Malay to take in a new view of any subject which they have been accustomed to regard from another point; and to say that a queen can write a letter must be as shocking to their sense of propriety as to say that she can black boots or sweep crossings.

I have incidentally mentioned tigers. If half the stories the natives told us of them had been true, the tigers would have been so thickly crowded together on the hill, there would not have been room for them to stand. Nevertheless, more than a year passed away without our seeing or hearing

one ourselves. One evening I was sitting up later than usual in the mosquito-house, reading. By degrees my attention was distracted from the book by an unusual sound in the distance. It began with a quiet ‘Aa-ow-m ! aaowmm !’ like the gigantic sigh of some enormous animal, fetched at every step, as if it were lame, or in pain, or groaning at its own unwieldiness ; but the noise increased each moment. I thought it must be one of the Sultan’s buffaloes, left out in the swamp, either by mistake or because it was unable to follow the herd through illness. Whatever it was, the animal seemed to be lashing itself into a furious rage, for its utterings had now culminated in a tremendous roar—a roar that seemed to fill the whole air, and make not only the whole house but the very earth shake.

When it came to this I burst out of the

mosquito-house, and went up to the Malay policeman on guard, saying, ‘What in the world is that noise? is it a sick buffalo?’

‘No; mem, it is a tiger,’ said he quite calmly, but in a half whisper. ‘I beg the mem’s pardon for coming into the house, but I am afraid to remain below, as usual. Have I the mem’s permission to stay here?’

Of course I said ‘Yes,’ though I doubted whether the man was not mistaken. At this moment a still louder roar from the animal woke Mr. Innes, who had been taking a nap in a long chair. Even in the moment of waking he recognised the sound, and exclaimed, ‘Hallo, that’s a tiger!’

‘Is it?’ said I. ‘Are you sure?’

‘Quite sure; I know the roar quite well.’

‘Then hadn’t we better shut up the house a little?’ suggested I. But Mr. Innes

reminded me that there was only one room that could be shut up at all (my bedroom)—the others having no doors—and that if I shut myself in there, it would be very hot and of no use, as the whole building was so frail that a fine healthy tiger could make short work of pulling it down about our ears if he chose.

'Then what had we better do?' said I.

'Do nothing; sit down and read comfortably. The tiger won't disturb you—he is far more afraid of you than you are of him; besides, he will never enter a house where there is so much light as in this.'

The idea of sitting down and reading comfortably with a 'fine healthy tiger' making the most terrific noise just outside, and nothing, absolutely nothing, between me and it (no comfortable wrought-iron bars as at the 'Zoo'), was rather startling, as this was my first introduction to a tiger at

to try and shoot the tiger. We placed the men all in the kitchen, which was a detached building at the back ; we begged them not to make the slightest noise, as the tiger was very timid, and we tried to excite their cupidity by reminding them of the Government reward of twenty-five dollars for its body. But nothing came of it. The men professed to be very eager, but evidently did not really wish to kill the tiger, as every time he came near they whispered loudly, ran about and stumbled over each other in their pretended *empressement*. We were not much surprised at this, as we knew the Malays have all sorts of superstitions about tigers, and consider it very unlucky to kill one.

To descend from large game to small, I should devote a few words to the snipe, which were certainly one of the most striking points about Langat. They came

only in the wet season, so it was some months after our arrival before we saw them ; but then they came literally in thousands. That year, before the Resident and his friends came up to shoot them, we counted them by twenties at a time without stirring from our chairs, as they ran along in the high grass below our verandas—for by this time we had added some unpretending verandas, and a couple of bath-rooms, made of palm-leaves, to the house. They were so tame that when I went out to feed my fowls they would run up with the fowls from the force of example, to see what it was that I was throwing.

I do not suppose this Langat ground had ever been shot over before since the Creation at that time ; as our immediate predecessor had been a Eurasian *locum-tenens*, and during the time of *his* predecessor and

of a former Resident, the war and the troubled state of the country must have given them other things to think about than shooting snipe. At any rate, I saw a remarkable difference in the behaviour of the snipe before and after the first *battue*; their guileless confidence was all gone, and though the enormous bags made by the Resident and his friends made no appreciable difference in their numbers, they shunned human society, and never again ran about with my fowls—not even at the beginning of the succeeding snipe seasons.

Seeing how brave my countrymen were among the snipe, I suggested to them once that they should get up a party to kill a certain tiger, which was said to have eaten twenty-two Chinese coolies, one after the other, in a place called Damansara, near Klang; but they did not seem to see it. They told me it was impossible, on account

of the thickness and impenetrability of the jungle. I believe this was true; for in Selangor there were neither elephants nor natives accustomed to act as beaters. Still, I cannot see why elephants should not be obtained from Perak, and the natives trained to beat the jungle. Everything must have a beginning; and it is probable that if nearly all the tigers are allowed, owing to the superstitions of the natives and the apathy of Europeans, to die natural deaths at good old ages, they will increase and multiply faster than is convenient.

It was at the end of the cholera epidemic that we obtained a holiday and went to Singapore for three weeks. We had only been a year in the jungle, but it seemed like ten. I used to maintain that in Langat the days were longer, and there were more of them in a year, than anywhere else in the world. This made

us enjoy our holiday all the more. We went to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where it was delightful to see white faces at every meal, and to eat fresh beef and mutton instead of the eternal fowl. Some people abuse the hotels of Singapore, and criticize the food severely ; it is evident those people have never lived at Langat.

We hired a carriage by the week, and to the amusement of our friends, filled up the intervals between lawn-tennis parties, luncheons, etc., etc., by driving up and down the streets in the most populous parts, for the mere pleasure of seeing a crowd. We also went to balls and dances, dinners and the theatre. It was a sad day for me when the three weeks were over, and we had to go back to our jungle again. We tried hard to persuade some of our friends to come and pay us a visit in our retirement ; but they knew better than to

do so. The friendship of even the most devoted of them only went as far as promising.

We took back with us to Langat the plan of our new bungalow that was to be. This had been sketched originally by Mr. Innes, and then submitted to the Resident, who sent it back with an alteration that struck us at the time as singular. Mr. Innes had divided the space allotted him by the contractor—a Chinaman called Lengo—into four rooms only; these rooms were twenty feet by twenty each, except one, the Court-room, which was twenty by thirty, the space in the back half of the house being given to it; that in the front half was occupied by an entrance-hall. These four rooms the Resident insisted on subdividing into ten or twelve, the largest of them being ten feet by ten each. In vain we represented to him that three rooms

and a Court-room—besides, of course, kitchen and servants' rooms, which were in a separate building—were quite enough for us, and would probably be more than enough for our successor, as married men were rare in the service; he was not of our opinion, for I imagine he had his own views as to who our successor was likely to be. Fortunately for our comfort, the first thing the administrator did, on looking at the plan, was to strike out more than half the rooms, restoring Mr. Innes's plan to its original state.

Although we now had the plan, we did not seem to have advanced much towards getting the house. The contractor, Lengo, was employed in building a Residency at Klang, and we were to have him when that was finished. Meantime, the weeks and months rolled on with their usual monotony.

CHAPTER VII.

TUNKU DIA UDIN.

E had a visit from Tunku Dia Udin, the Viceroy of Selangor, and son-in-law to the Sultan, about this time. He was young and good-looking, not much darker, if at all, in complexion than an Italian or a Spaniard. He was certainly not a strict Mahometan ; he not only drank brandy and soda and champagne, but ate ham. The drinking of champagne, Mahometan imaums say, is not contrary to the Koran, because champagne was not invented in Mahomet's days. 'If,' say they, 'Mahomet could have foretold the

invention of champagne, undoubtedly he would have permitted his followers to drink it, because it is so nice!' From this it would seem as if they did not claim for Mahomet any divine inspiration, nor even prophetic powers, beyond those to which 'old experience doth attain.'

At first I rejoiced at Tunku Dia Udin's laxness, thinking I should have no trouble in providing for him. But I was mistaken. The first night he dined with us I was amazed and disgusted at the dirty knives and forks, smeared glasses, and half-wiped plates that were given to us. I looked in vain for Apat, our Chinese house-boy, and for the 'disorderly;' they were not in the room. After dinner was over I sent for them, and asked them the meaning of this unwonted slovenliness, and why they had been absent. They replied, nearly weeping, that the Tunku's men had turned Taip out

of the kitchen, and would not allow him to have anything to do with the cooking ; and that Apat and the orderly had been likewise deposed, the Tunku's men saying they were going to do everything in the style observed at 'Gubbament House, Singapore.'

My men were evidently much insulted at the treatment they had received. Their news put me in something of a difficulty. I did not want to have a quarrel with the Tunku, and yet I did not choose that he and his savages should take entire command in our house, royal prince though he might be ; so I told my servants that although the Tunku might, if he pleased, have his own men to wait on him, I intended to have mine to wait on me, and that on pain of my extreme displeasure they were to do so in future. This arrangement was kept to during the rest of the

Tunku's stay, his followers carefully serving him and his party with dirty glasses and plates in what they imagined to be 'Gubbam-
ent House' style, while our servants as carefully brightened up ours to an ostentatious pitch of perfection, and cast scornful glances at the other party over our heads. I afterwards heard that the conduct of the Tunku's followers was quite customary in the Malay houses that he honoured with his presence. It was his invariable rule to have all his food cooked for him by his own cook, and tasted for him by his own taster before he ate it ; this was for fear of poison.

The Malays talk and think a great deal of poisoning, but I do not believe the crime is nearly so common among them as they themselves suppose it to be. Any sudden death, which is not obviously from old age, accident, fever or cholera, they attribute to poison.

I had another little difference of opinion with the Tunku's men before they left. There were forty of them, exclusive of his cook and 'boys,' but not one of them ever did a stroke of work. Their whole occupation seemed to be to cover themselves with krides and other weapons, and lie about in the shade of the house, or swagger down to the bazaar. I suppose they looked on themselves in the light of warriors, not to be put to base or ignoble uses ; but the consequence was that I found my own three servants groaning under the extra work imposed on them. The Tunku was attended by two men, who slept in his room, and dined at our table, being presumably of high rank ; and on these men Taip, Apat, and the water-carrier had to wait all day long, cleaning out their room several times, carrying water sufficient for nine extra

baths from the river, and running on all sorts of errands for them.

Mr. Innes and I could only get our own wants attended to in a perfunctory manner, and during the few intervals when the Tunku and his companions did not happen to be wanting anything. It seemed to me very absurd that a man should have forty-three servants in attendance, and yet that the bulk of the work should be thrown on my men, who had already enough to do; so I once more came to the rescue. This time, grown bolder, I gave one of the Tunku's men the benefit of my opinions, and actually succeeded in inducing him to go and fetch water for his masters; but he did not like it, and I fancy eventually told the Tunku what I had said, for the next time his Highness came to stay at Langat he went to his father-in-law the Sultan's. At this I own I rejoiced, for although the

Tunku himself was very pleasant when he chose, he did not always choose; and his two friends were most disgusting inmates; we had to burn the bedding after they left.

The Tunku himself was not at all disgusting in his habits or appearance; on the contrary, he was a great dandy. I used to catch glimpses of him going to the bathroom in a most gorgeous toilette of pale blue quilted silk, perfectly fresh; he looked like some brilliant tropical bird. His silk caps, embroidered with gold, were innumerable, and when his bedding was carried, Malay fashion, publicly down to his boat, I noticed that the pillows were of mauve satin, the round ends being almost entirely of pure gold.

One should always try to see a question from both sides. I see now, by the light of subsequently acquired knowledge, that no doubt the Tunku expected, when visiting

us, to be treated as he would have been treated by a Malay raja. That is, we should have given him up our whole house with the kitchen, and have ourselves retired into another, if we had it; if not, we should have quartered ourselves on our neighbours. We should have sent every day a sack of rice, with fowls, eggs, salt-fish, and vegetables sufficient for the consumption of himself and his forty-five followers; and we should have ordered up an army of slaves to wait on them. We should have cheerfully spent our last penny, and the last penny of everyone in the village, in entertaining a prince who had almost as many pounds a year as we had pence—and when at his departure we found ourselves without food, we should have ‘squeezed’ the poor ryots of the district until they had made good to us the loss occasioned by the visit of royalty.

When you are in Malaya you should do as the Malays do, would no doubt be the Tunku's view; and without question he must have thought us both shabby and inhospitable. It must be very difficult for a Malay to understand how strictly limited is an English official's income and household; his own are so extremely elastic. As for an English magistrate's not using the splendid opportunities of 'squeezing' that his position gives him, no Malay would believe it. In their country it is the rule for the poor to give to the rich—reversing the order of things common in Europe.

Tunku Panglima Raja was walking one day with Mr. Innes; they passed the garden of a poor ryot, where some fine Indian corn was growing.

'Go, fetch me that corn,' said the Tunku to his followers, and the men immediately

broke through the poor man's fence, tore up the corn, and brought it to their master. No compensation whatever was offered to the unfortunate owner, who, attracted by the noise, came to his door and humbly bowed and smiled when he saw that a raja had condescended to appropriate his corn. What would an English cottager say to such conduct? In the same way Mr. Innes has seen a poor fisherman deprived of all the fish in his boat, except a few of the shabbiest that were tossed contemptuously to him as his share, by the greedy followers of Tunku Alang, who, unluckily for the fisherman, happened to pass as he landed. The ryots never dream of resisting this oppression; in fact, they really seem to like it. I suppose they think that when a raja thus helps himself to their goods it gives them a sort of claim on him, which, though never put into words, may at some future

day be worth a good deal to them in the shape of food, clothing, or protection.

The relation between a raja and a ryot seems to be a truly paternal one; the raja may take from the latter anything that he gains, but is bound in return not to let the ryot starve, and to stand by him in danger. If a Malay ryot commits murder, or any other crime for which he is 'wanted' by the police, the raja whom he follows—if he be a fine old Malay raja, one of the olden time—screens him. He would no more think of handing him over to justice than an English father would think of handing over his own son; nor would it be expected of him by anybody; in fact, in the one case as in the other, public opinion would cry shame on him if he did. Fortunately for justice, the rajahs are hardly ever friends among themselves, so though no one would tell tales of his own followers, everyone

rushes to the police to tell of his neighbours'.

The want of cordiality towards each other among the rajas is striking and strange to a European. Besides the three adult sons of the Sultan, before mentioned, there was another son in Langat, a boy called Sah. He was just about the same age as Raja Sleman, the son of the Tunku Muda, and was, I should think, of about equal birth—one being the son, the other the grandson, of the Sultan, and their mothers and grandmothers being in neither case of royal birth. These two boys, being the only boys in Langat of a rank above the ryot-class, would have seemed to an English eye marked out by circumstances to be each other's playmates. But they never drew together. During the whole of my stay in Langat I hardly ever saw them speak to each other. Every day Raja Sleman was

playing sepak-raga (a game of ball) at one end of the village surrounded by his attendants, while Sah was playing the same game at the other end, surrounded by his. I once asked little Raja Sleman why they did not play together, and he replied sententiously, that it was not the custom for Malay rajas to do so.

We used to think it would have been very much better for Sah could he have had a companion of his own class who would have stood out for independence, and perhaps now and then given him a thrashing. As it was, the boy was surrounded by slaves, who allowed themselves (even when grown men and women) to be kicked, beaten, cheated, and bullied by this little tyrant, and the consequence was that he grew up rude, passionate, and brutal. At the same time, I must remark that this system of education, in which each petty

raja moves as the sun of a small universe, never seeing any potentate bigger than himself, and never from childhood being contradicted or thwarted, results in the development of a dignity of manner and deportment such as I have never seen in Europe—no, not even in an English school-master.

I think that anyone wishing to study a royal bearing should go to a Malay raja. The cause of this is not far to seek; it is simply that each Malay raja really and thoroughly believes himself to be the greatest man in the whole world. He may perhaps have heard once or twice in his life that there are countries beyond the boundaries of Malaya, but he is convinced they are very inferior; while as to the rajas whom he has met, he knows, or persuades himself, that their pedigree will not bear comparison with his own.

The fact that Malay rajas are very seldom friends to each other is greatly in favour of the safety of the few English scattered among them. I believe that no two rajas would ever join heartily together against the English, or indeed in any cause whatever; the one would always betray the other. Nor would the Malays ever combine with the Chinese against the English. Malays—the patriotic ones—do not love us; why should they?—but they love the Chinese still less, and with good reason. For the Chinese have, in an exaggerated form, all the qualities which the Malays dislike in us. A Malay is by nature the laziest being on the face of the earth. He would like to lie under a banana-tree all his life, and let the fruit drop into his mouth. He thinks an Englishman unnecessarily and troublesome energetic, but a Chinaman more

so. He considers the English unclean feeders because they eat pork and drink brandy; much more, therefore, the Chinamen, who eat not only pork, but dogs, cats, rats, snakes, and all manner of vermin.

The manners of the English seem abrupt, unpolished, and disagreeably frank to a Malay, who is always slow and dignified, and in whose code of politeness it is a first law that people should rather tell each other pleasant falsehoods than unpleasant truths. But the manners of the Chinamen in Malaya, who are all of the coolie class, are absolutely brutal. An additional cause of dislike to Chinamen is that they invade the Malay country by thousands at a time, and by working in the tin-mines, and at every possible trade, take the bread directly out of the mouths of the poor Malays, whom they undersell, and whose mild attempts at industry are thrown into the

shade by these indefatigable coolies. As for the half-dozen or dozen English in the country, the Malay ryot cannot fail to perceive that he personally is the richer, not the poorer, for their presence; their salaries do not come out of his pocket, but out of the Sultan's; their laws are all in his favour, and any work that he may do for them is sure to be well paid.

Another safeguard against a successful Malay outbreak, is the Malays' incorrigible unpunctuality. Were the rajas all to agree to meet together at a certain time and place, probably not one in ten would keep the tryst correctly. Some would be days too soon, others days too late. This national unpunctuality is a source of great annoyance to any Europeans who have to deal with them.

We had the greatest difficulty in making our servants, or the policemen, or the boat-

boys understand that when we named a certain hour for them to be ready, we meant it literally. Their natural inclination was to think that an hour later, or even two or three, would do just as well. A very vexatious instance (to me) of this unpunctuality was displayed by our little cook, Taip, on the occasion of the first Governor's visit we ever had at Langat. Sir William Jervois, with two or three gentlemen in his suite, appeared one day quite unexpectedly in a steam-launch at the Bandar, having come from the steamer *Pluto*, which was lying at the river's mouth. We were delighted, and also at his having come without the Resident, who, when present, always took the lion's share of a Governor's attention, hardly allowing anyone else to get in a word.

The Governor and his suite went off to see the Sultan, after having sat down and

talked a little; and I then went and ordered dinner to be got ready on the chance of their returning to eat it. Taip promised me it should be ready in half an hour; I impressed on him that he must be punctual, as the Governor, I knew, wished to get out of the river before the tide ebbed, on account of the sand-bar at the mouth. Nevertheless, half an hour—an hour—an hour and a half passed; the Governor had long been back from the Sultan's, and yet no dinner appeared! We could not imagine what was wrong; from time to time Mr. Innes or I slipped away from our guests, and cried in agony to Taip: 'When *are* you going to give us dinner? What on earth has gone wrong? Do for heaven's sake send something up—anything—only be quick!' But it was of no avail. The end of it was that the Governor and his party were obliged to go, all that Taip had

produced having been some fried sausages and potatoes! while, a quarter of an hour afterwards, a magnificent dinner (for those parts) was set on the table for the sole delectation of Mr. Innes and myself, who were far too mortified and angry to eat it.

When our vexation had a little cooled down, we sent for the delinquent and asked him the cause of the delay. He declared, first, that Tuan S——, one of the Governor's suite, had told him, in reply to his question, that the Governor could not possibly stop for dinner (this was true, we knew); and secondly, that he had been running about for nearly an hour trying to find a Chinaman to handle a ham for him. Considering what a very lax Mahometan he was on other points, we thought this last excuse was rather too good, and we could not refrain from suggesting that had it been a bottle of brandy (an article equally for-

bidden by the Koran) he would not have asked any Chinaman to help him in disposing of it; whereat the little wretch grinned, and the subject dropped.

I think we were always too lenient to our servants in the jungle; we never beat, or fined, or put them in prison, as other Europeans did. Consequently we were not so well served as other Europeans; but on the other hand we were less robbed, and our servants never absconded from us. This last was a great advantage, for if they had, we could not have got others for weeks, perhaps months. We were thought very fortunate, and we thought ourselves so, for having brought Taip and Apat with us from Sarawak, though Taip was by no means a model. No Singapore servant could have been induced to come and live in so desolate a country for any amount of wages; so our only chance would have

been, had we not been already supplied, to take any of the totally untrained local savages that might offer themselves, and try to make silk purses out of them.

The unpunctuality of Malays is, I believe, partly the fault of their religion, which forbids them to count their age. An ordinary Malay never knows how old he is, or what o'clock it is, or what day of the month it is, or even what is the current year. The imam and the clerk are expected to know all these things, but it is nobody else's business. They tell the people once a year when the month of Ramazan arrives, and during that month the Malays count every hour and minute, because they find the fasting inconvenient; but if you ask them the names even of the other months in the year, they cannot tell you.

Although I said the Malays do not like fasting for a whole month, yet I do not

mean that they are either gourmands or gourmets. They are singularly free from the vices of gluttony and epicurism. A large bowl of rice, and a few sambals, are all they require; and this dinner they will eat day after day and year after year without desiring any change. The word 'sambal' is usually translated 'condiment,' or 'relish.' The sambals most in vogue with Malays are little bits of salt-fish, dried roes, chilies, blachang, hard-boiled eggs, and cucumber.

They are quite content with one of these dainties, especially if it be salt-fish; but the latter is thought by some Europeans to be the cause in great measure of the numerous skin diseases which attack the Malays, as the fish, especially that used in the composition of blachang, is generally half-putrid before being salted. The Malays like it with a gamey flavour, and so do the China-

men; though they are much shocked at Europeans for eating cheese that has mites in it. Apat, one day, even wanted to throw away a piece of excellent Stilton just arrived from a co-operative store, because it had a little 'blue' in it.

The Chinese study the art of dining far more than the Malays. A Chinese coolie at his dinner is a curious sight. I have often seen one of them squatting on board a steamer with a large bowl of rice in front of him, and fully a dozen tiny little cups standing round, each containing a different sambal. He dips his chop-sticks first into the rice and then into a sambal-cup, and thus flavours each mouthful of rice with a different flavour. You scarcely ever see him take the same sambal for two mouthfuls running.

The Malays of a household, I was told by Tunku Panglima Raja, never dine all

together. They seem to regard eating as a necessary bore, to be gone through once, or at the most twice, daily, like washing one's hands; and they see no more reason for dining together than for washing their hands together. Each member of the family, argued the Tunku, is hungry at a different hour from the rest, and at a different hour each day, according to the employment on which he has been engaged. Therefore each member, when he begins to feel hungry, orders some rice to be boiled, and there is an end of the matter. The ordinary sambals are always ready, and require no cooking, so there is no trouble about them. Often, in England, when waiting an hour or more for dinner, because some one else was late, I have thought how sensible it is of the Malays to eat as they do, without regard to each other.

The women are great hands at making

sweet cakes and confectionery, and on a feast-day often sent us as a present large trays covered with twenty or thirty tiny saucers, each containing some oddly-shaped sweetmeats. We generally tried them all, and found them all much alike, tasting of coarse sugar and flour, with cocoanut-oil or treacle; but there were some made of cocoanut and sugar only that were really nice.

Malays will not eat anything cooked by a Chinaman. They declare that the Chinese use pork fat in all their cookery, and that they are extremely dirty. I suspect the Malays are tolerably correct in making the first assertion, and I know they are as to the second.

If you wish to entertain the Malays with coffee and cakes, the best way is to send for some old Malay woman, noted for her skill. She will make you any number of sweetmeats, and will charge you very little for

them, and as the whole village will probably see her making them, you cannot be suspected of having employed your Chinese cook in the matter. We were seldom reduced to calling in an old woman while Taip was with us, as he, being a Malay, was generally thought good enough to cook for his co-religionists; but there were those who looked askance upon him, and would eat nothing of his making, because he was not a sufficiently strict Mahometan.

Poor little Taip suffered a good deal of ignominy, I am afraid, in Langat, through his having become our cook. He always seemed delighted to escape for a time from his culinary duties, and when Mr. Innes and I went to the hill, or made a short trip along the sea-shore, he generally volunteered to take an oar in the boat. As he was very good at rowing, his offers were accepted; one of the regular boatmen, to

whom the work had not the charm of novelty, gladly staying at home in his stead. On these occasions the boatmen would sing, if encouraged by us, and after exhausting their stock of volkslieder, would begin to improvise. Taip and they, on one occasion, chanted alternate verses, evidently chaffing each other. I could not understand all that they said, for Malays always sing very nasally, and with an exaggerated tremolo; but I made out that Taip was hurling withering sarcasms at the boatmen and their country, and glorifying Sarawak; while they retorted by asking why, if Sarawak was so fascinating, had he left it? I only recollect one couplet—it has stuck in my memory, because I often afterwards quoted it, when life was particularly stagnant. It was Taip's composition:

‘Orang Langat, jangan main ;
Main di Langat t’ada jadi.’

This may be freely rendered :

'Langat folks are very slow ;
Fun in Langat is no go.'

A more literal translation would be :

'Langat youths, don't try to play ;
Fun in Langat does not pay.'

The Malay style of singing is remarkably unpleasing.

It was in this same year that another distinguished visitor came up to Langat in the Resident's train. The Resident wrote to us about him beforehand, telling us he was a French Count, of old family, with a château in Normandy, another somewhere else, and an income of 'forty thousand a year.' He was travelling for distraction, having suffered a disappointment in love, and from the way in which the Resident sang his praises, we began to suspect that he hoped the French Count might find

consolation for his woes in the Residency at Klang.

In due time the Resident, 'the Count' and some young ladies made their appearance. The Count certainly did not seem broken-hearted. On being asked to sing, he gave us, of all songs for a French nobleman, the 'Marseillaise!' singing it, too, with great fervour, as if he thoroughly shared its sentiments. He seemed very much interested in Malay krises; showed us some handsome ones that he had already bought from the natives, and asked Mr. Innes to make known at Langat the fact that he was willing to buy any good specimens. He wanted them, he said, in order to make presents of them to his friends on his return home.

When the Resident next visited Langat, he was alone, and we could therefore discuss 'the Count.' I fear we showed a

somewhat sceptical turn of mind with regard to him. Mr. Innes suggested that the 'forty thousand a year' might be forty thousand francs; and I suggested that it was improbable, almost to impossibility, that a French count, young and rich, should leave 'la belle France' voluntarily from any motive whatever, and rough it in remote jungles. We found, however, that the Count had come to Klang with the strongest recommendations from the authorities in Penang and Perak, and the Resident was quite indignant at any doubt being thrown on his hero. He asked: 'Why should it not be true? and what do you take him for?' Mr. Innes replied: 'For a bagman, travelling to collect krises for the Australian Exhibition.'

This was not a very bad guess. A few months afterwards the Singapore gossips

were full of the report that the 'Count' had no right whatever to that title; that he was a forger, fresh from serving his time in a French gaol, and that his present occupation was collecting, not kries for the Australian Exhibition, but monstrosities for Mr. Farini, of the Aquarium. The object of his travels in these parts was to find a 'hairy family,' supposed to reside somewhere in Burmah or Siam. These, when found, he was to persuade into accompanying him to England, to be exhibited.

At all the houses in the Straits Settlements where 'the Count' had been feted and made much of, he was now dubbed 'the Impostor,' and stories began to be circulated of his having left debts behind him. But these stories, on being inquired into, melted away; and far from his hosts having suffered pecuniary loss by him, it

was found that he had made handsome presents to one or more members of the family in almost every instance. Most people, nevertheless, were very indignant on hearing that they had received a convicted forger into their houses. Mr. Innes and I had none of this feeling; we were not responsible for his being our guest, as he had been brought to us by the Resident, and we were rather pleased with our own discrimination, for having found out at once that he had neither the manners nor the appearance of one of the *ancienne noblesse*.

About six months after our visit to Singapore, the contractor Lengo finished the Klang Residency and came to Langat. In the meantime we had chosen a site for our new bungalow, and had had it cleared of trees by Inchi Simun and a staff of Malays working under him. We unfor-

tunately did not know at that time what we learnt afterwards, namely, that it is possible, by searching the ground where you are going to build for the nests of the white ants and destroying them, to keep it free from them for months, perhaps even years. So we neglected this precaution, and the consequence was that the first poles were hardly up a week before the white ants' galleries had run up to the top of them. However, the wood was pretty hard, and therefore lasted our time, notwithstanding the ants. I am told the house is still in good preservation.

We took much interest in the building, and used to go to the hill almost every day to see how it progressed. It seemed a long time before any wood was ready ; and again, after it was ready the work was delayed many weeks on account of the non-arrival of the bricks for building the

little pillars on which the house was to rest, and of the bricklayers. When at last their part was done, a further delay was necessary to allow the mortar to dry.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALONE.

AT this juncture the Resident fell ill, and went away. He was supposed at first to be only gone to Malacca for medical advice, and he asked Mr. Innes to do his duty for him for a week, at the end of which time he hoped to return. At the week's end, however, he did not re-appear ; and by degrees we heard, first that he had gone on to Singapore, and then that he had been invalided to Hong Kong. It was four months before he returned. During the whole of that time I lived alone at Langat, and Mr. Innes

at Klang, he paying me a flying visit once in ten days or so, to see whether I was still alive. These visits were made at the cost of great discomfort to him, for he had to come the whole way to Langat in a native boat, a mode of travelling which he disliked almost as much as I did ; and instead of being able to have a comfortable meal and bath on his arrival, the short time that he could spare between the tides was taken up in hearing the reports of the police, in taking over the money that had been collected (duty paid on tin, etc.), or in paying wages and allowances. I thought then, and I still think, that we were badly treated by the Government on that occasion. When the authorities in Singapore knew that the Resident was gone for some months, they should have made some arrangement for allotting a house, or part of a house, in Klang, to the Acting-

Resident and his wife. This was, I believe, invariably done in the case of other officials who acted for their superiors; and I suppose the only reason it was not done in our case was that Mr. Innes was too modest to assert our rightful claim to the Residency at Klang. It must be admitted there was a little difficulty in the way: the Resident's wife and family, having at length arrived from England, were now occupying the Residency, and had we been allowed to take possession of it, as seemed our right, what was to become of them? There was no other house in Klang fit to receive them, and our old wigwam at Langat had not sufficient accommodation for so large a family. Still, the Government might surely have found some house for them—the Stadt-Haus at Malacca, for instance, which was generally empty. Had such an arrangement been made, it would

have saved much friction. But by this time a new Governor had arisen in Singapore, who 'knew not Joseph,' and who never visited Langat at all.

The four months during which I was alone at Langat were on the whole the dreariest time for me of all my stay in the East, and that is saying a good deal. It makes an enormous difference in such a place as Langat, whether you have or have not some one to talk to—even though it may be that you only avail yourself of the privilege in order to grumble. I had no books and no companions, for even the Malay rajas, who up till then had been in the habit of calling on us, ceased their visits. We found out the cause of this through a conversation which Mr. Innes had with the Sultan about this time.

The Sultan began by saying he was

sorry Mr. Innes was obliged to go to Klang, as he had heard so much about our new house that he was anxious to see it. Mr. Innes replied that he would have been most happy to show it him had it been possible, ‘but,’ he added, ‘will not your Highness go and look at it without waiting for my return? Mrs. Innes will be able to show you over it at any time you like.’ The Sultan seemed much shocked, and explained that this would be contrary to Malay etiquette; that it was a grave breach of decorum for any man to enter another man’s house during his absence, or to speak to his wife.

‘The custom on this point is so strict,’ said he, ‘that if I were to meet my own daughter, Tunku Chi, on the road, going to or from her boat, I must not speak to her. It would be an insult to her, and would injure her position, that *any* man,

even her own father, shculd be seen speaking to her.'

This seemed to us truly absurd, but Malay ideas of what is insulting to women are in many points very different from ours. It is no rudeness if a Malay raja calls on a lady with bare legs, feet, arms and shoulders; but I found out from Tunku Dia Udin, when he was staying with us, that it is an insult to her if a Malay takes off his cap in her presence. He asked my permission one day to do so, saying that as it was very hot, he begged to be allowed to follow English fashions. As several Englishmen, including Mr. Innes, were sitting in the room without their hats, I could not well refuse, though as a rule I consider it a mistake to allow natives to do things which they have just carefully explained are insulting.

Another Malay raja told me one day that I should always take notice how a man's kris was stuck into his sarong. If it were stuck with the handle turned outwards, ready to be grasped, that meant to say that the wearer regarded you as an enemy, and was prepared to stab you at any moment. If the handle were turned the other way, it meant that the wearer was friendly. I must confess that this piece of advice was lost on me; for whenever Malay rajahs called on me I was too much taken up in trying to learn Malay from them to notice how they wore their kries. I was always careful, however, to see that my Chinese servants did not behave to me with what I knew were outward marks of disrespect. If my cook came to me with his pigtail curled round his head, and no jacket on, I used to send him back to dress himself properly before I would

condescend to order the dinner. It was very necessary to do this, as Chinamen are always inclined to be impertinent to the 'mem.'

It was now the wet season, and eternally raining, so that even the delights of the mud-path were often closed to me; while the mosquitoes were more vicious than ever, and the malaria from the swamp swept through the house in visible masses of vapour. The malaria was made worse than usual by the removal of the three Indian road-coolies, the egg-stealers before mentioned, whose business it had always been to keep the ditches round the house clean and free from weeds. Before the Resident's departure, these men had been sent for to Klang to do some work which was not yet finished. The consequence was that our ditches became foul with decaying weeds and stagnant water, and

exhaled a putrid smell, especially in the evenings.

Now and then I managed to pay a visit to the hill, but what I saw there did not tend to raise my spirits much. The workmen were generally absent, and when I succeeded in finding Lengo, the contractor—unearthed for me by the police from the opium or spirit-shop—he always declared that the works were stopped for want of money, and that if I would only advance him another hundred dollars or so, it would be all right.

It was, I knew, the invariable custom to advance a great part of the contract-money in similar cases, but I felt afraid of doing it, lest the man should abscond with his workmen, leaving us *plantés là* in the wilderness with a half-finished house; so I doled the money out in parsimonious driblets, always insisting on seeing for

myself what he had to show for the last instalment before I gave him another. He seemed to think it a capital joke that an English 'mem' should lord it over him in this manner, and far from being sulky or insulted—as an English contractor would have been—when I remarked that he had shown me the same beams twice over as brand-new purchases, he laughed good-naturedly, admitted I was right, and acquiesced meekly in my decision that he was to have no more money till he could show me some fresh wood. This was really good of him, for, as he must have known, we were completely in his power. Had he chosen to break his contract, and make his own terms with us, we must have complied with them; or had he chosen to levant some night, taking the Government safe with him, no one could have prevented him. Once landed at Penang or Singa-

pore, and protected by his Hoey (secret society), he might have stayed there comfortably for life without our being able to lay a hand on him. Fortunately he was a tolerably honest man, as Chinamen go, and I think was in no hurry to curtail his sojourn in Jugra, with its beautiful air and water, and its unrestricted opportunities in the way of gambling, arrack and opium.

Apropos of the Government safe, I found out accidentally that it was particularly carelessly guarded at this time. One night, not being able to sleep for the heat, I dressed and came out of my room for a 'quarter-deck walk' in the Court-room. I noticed the absence of the usual policemen on guard (during Mr. Innes's absence there were two instead of one, for additional safety), but supposed they might be patrolling round the house, and would

soon appear. Half an hour having passed without any sign of them, I thought they might be asleep, and called out loudly, 'Orang jaga!' ('Watchman!') several times. No reply. As far as I could tell, I myself appeared to be the only living being in the house or neighbourhood, for it was not the custom in the Malay peninsula for the servants to sleep on the premises. I felt this was not right, as the safe was there quite unprotected, and the population of Langat, I knew, consisted mainly of people who, if not already thieves, only lacked opportunity to make them so. It was between one and two o'clock in the morning. As I was walking about the room, debating what I should do, and vowing vengeance on the policemen for deserting their post, I caught sight of our kitchen, a detached building at the back of the house, and to my astonishment noted that it was

brightly lit up, and that sounds of singing and merriment were proceeding therefrom.

I waited until there was a lull, and then called the servants by name. They heard me, and Apat, the Chinese ‘boy,’ came out. To my questions he replied reluctantly, as not wishing to tell tales; but I gathered that Taip, the Malay cook, was giving an evening party; that several Malay women (of course, of the lowest possible class) were present, and that the policemen, who ought to have been guarding the house and the safe, were also among the guests. I thereupon sent for Taip. He came, and could not deny anything that Apat had said, so I told him to send the women away at once, and the policemen to their posts. This was all I said to him that night, as he appeared to be a little the worse for arrack; but next day I wrote to Mr. Innes, telling

him of the affair, and the result was that we agreed to dispense with Mr. Taip's services in future. This little incident alone would not have been sufficient to induce us to part with him; but it was the 'last straw' coming on the top of many offences: dirt, carelessness, intemperance, and disobedience being the most conspicuous. Little Taip had, nevertheless, a great many good qualities: he was clever, a capital cook when he chose, and devoted to Mr. Innes, whom he once had nursed tenderly through a bad illness. The very fact of his becoming our cook, having in Sarawak been our 'boy,' was a proof of great devotion in a Malay.

A Mahometan who becomes cook to heretics, known to be in the habit of eating the flesh of the unclean animal, loses caste among his fellows. Taip knew this perfectly well, and also that besides his reputa-

tion, he was throwing over his religion and his country ; yet he deliberately volunteered for the post, it being the only means whereby he could follow Mr. Innes's fortunes. True, we *did* hear that the sacrifice of his country was made easier to him by the thought that in leaving Sarawak he was leaving his wife, his squabbles with whom were notorious.

Unfortunately little Taip's devotion to Mr. Innes was never extended to me. He was deeply imbued with the notion common to all Orientals, and still to be found, I believe, in old-fashioned Latin grammars, that 'the masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine.' Stuart Mill says you may always know, by a man's opinion of women, what his wife is like ; and doubtless the whole sex suffered in Mr. Taip's estimation from the fact of his not 'getting on' with Mrs. Taip.

Taip had been Mr. Innes's confidential servant before our marriage, and was by no means disposed to abdicate, still less to obey me. He calmly disregarded my orders nine times out of ten, or delegated them to Apat. He had been accustomed to have everything under his charge, from the wine and spirits down to the household linen, and resented any interference or even supervision from me. For some time I put up with all this, as all my acquaintances, including Mr. Innes, told me that the less I looked into my own kitchen, and the less I knew about household matters, the more smoothly things were likely to go in the East, the servants being all men, and not accustomed to petticoat government.

By degrees, however, so much that was wrong in Master Taip's arrangements was forced on my notice that I insisted on

taking over certain departments from him in self-defence, and it ended in my exercising supervision in all.

I first took over the drinkables, and put them under lock and key. This was in consequence of his getting fearfully tipsy one night. There was some excuse to be made for him, I must own. It was the night of the Hari Raya, or New Year's Day—a great feast among the natives, when they all put on their best clothes and came to call on us. All day long we received more than a hundred of them by relays at a time, and gave them coffee and cakes, which Taip had to make, as the Malays are very careful not to eat or drink anything made by a Chinaman; and besides the constant brewing of coffee in a hot kitchen, he had to cook a big dinner, the Resident and a large party being with us that day; so it was perhaps not wonderful that the poor little man, when

all his work was over, took rather more brandy than usual ; but I thought it best to keep the temptation out of his way for the future.

Then one day we found something very suspicious in the curry, and on overhauling his stock of ‘rumph,’ or curry-materials, I found them all *crawling*!—it was revolting to think that he had been making our curry from them for weeks past. Then another day I inquired after some particularly fine double-damask table-cloths, of a sort not made in these degenerate days. These had been given me as a wedding-present, so choice and rare were they considered. They had been delivered into Taip’s charge to be put by for high days and holidays, as they were too good to be subjected every week to the cruel beating on stones which was the dhoby’s method of washing. Taip did put them by, but how ? He kept them

for months in the kitchen-table drawer, with one corner of each carefully hanging down, on which he wiped everything, from the lamps to the knives and boots ! while in the same drawer he kept scraps of meat, days old and very ‘high,’ and all manner of odds and ends which had no business there.

Taip was a very ingenious little creature, but often showed his ingenuity in ways that were inconvenient. His delight was to use everything for the purpose for which he knew it was *not* intended ; thus, being given a quantity of different sorts of wine-glasses, white and coloured, and an elaborate flower-vase for the dinner-table, he one day used the wine-glasses to arrange flowers in, and wished to hand round the wine in the flower-vase ; this, not in the least because he did not know better, but merely because he had grown tired of putting them

to their proper uses, and thought a little variation would be agreeable. For the same reason he would, if possible, always screw the top of one lamp on to the base of another. The effects thus produced were extremely absurd when a large globe was put on the body of a small lamp, or *vice versa*; it was as if the dome of St. Paul's and of a parish church had changed places, or as if a big father were to change hats with his small boy.

He showed his intelligence once by taking my little travelling-clock, which would not go, to pieces. Unfortunately he broke the mainspring in trying to put it together again—a disaster which was only remedied in Singapore at the cost of a good many dollars. Another time he pulled to pieces a wonderful pocket-knife Mr. Innes had lent him, and expected the Tuan to put it together again. The simplicity with which a Malay

expects you to know everything connected with things European is really touching.

Taip's religion, though he was very far from being a strict Mahometan, used to be pressed into the service sometimes as an excuse for his untidiness. One day I saw a very dirty plate in the pantry, half-filled with fat, and as a natural consequence swarming with ants. I told Taip to wash it, but some days afterwards found it still in the same place, unwashed, the fat having nearly disappeared, while the coating of ants was thicker than ever. On speaking to Taip again about it he only looked sulky; but Apat, the Chinaman, shortly afterwards cleaned the plate, and told me that the reason of Taip's disobedience was that the fat was pork fat, and therefore his religion forbade him to touch it.

I could not but reflect on this, and many similar occasions, that the Prophet Maho-

met's regulations were rather shortsighted, as in trying to make his followers particularly refined and clean in their habits, he had only succeeded in making them particularly dirty. Their religion seemed always to forbid them to clean away any abomination, so the consequence was that their dwellings were permanently surrounded by nastiness which heretical noses and eyes could not have endured for a day.

Taip had no difficulty in getting a place on leaving us, for the Resident, to whom his vices and virtues were equally well known, secured him with delight, and I believe found him an excellent servant. The fact was, he had learnt one valuable lesson while with us, by which he profited in his new situation. He had learnt that it was a mistake to try to ignore an English 'mem,' and though his pride prevented his turning over a new leaf in our house, he turned it at

once, I heard, in his new place, and became the abject slave not only of the ‘mem,’ but of all the ‘meessies,’ or young ladies.

When I had been about two months alone, I fell ill. There was nothing the matter with me, but what fashionable doctors call ‘debility’—consequent, no doubt, partly on malaria, partly on ennui, and partly on the low diet—for tinned meats, whatever those people may say who only taste them now and then, are not nourishing food for a permanence; nor are sodden Malay fowls. The debility resulted in constant colds in the head, an ailment to which I had always been more or less subject. I took to my bed for days together; did nothing but sneeze all day and all night, and could not be at the trouble of ordering dinner.

Apat, the Chinaman, tapped at my door every morning to ask what I would have,

and I only replied : 'Oh, go away, and don't plague me ; I am very ill, and cannot eat anything.' But Apat was a good creature, and though he went away as bidden, used to return in a short time, saying, with another tap at the door: 'I have made some strong chicken-broth for the mem, and I am putting it outside the door.' Then I heard his steps retreating in the distance. It always ended in my coming out and taking the broth or whatever it was, and feeling ashamed of myself for having growled at poor old Apat. Many Chinese coolies, as I was well aware, would have taken me at my word and allowed me to starve, even to death if I chose, thinking to themselves that one white woman less in the world was no loss, but rather the reverse; but poor Apat was different. He always seemed to have a real liking both for Mr. Innes and my-

self, and was most unusually honest and truthful for a Chinaman. He, like Taip, had been Mr. Innes's servant for some years before our marriage.

On recovering a little, I became feverishly anxious to go to the hill for change of air. Two of the rooms in the new house were now finished, and there appeared to be no immediate chance of the rest being built, so I would wait no longer. The natives tried to dissuade me from going, saying that it was not safe; that the hill was full of tigers, and that to live in a house in the middle of the jungle without a fence round it was like asking the tigers to walk in. To all this I replied: 'If I stay here I shall die of the swamp; I would rather go to the hill and risk the tigers;' and I wrote to Mr. Innes to this effect. He had wished me to remain at the Bandar until the new house was finished, by which time he

hoped the Resident would have returned, and he himself would be free to superintend our flitting; but finding how much I was set on getting out of the swamp at once, he gave way, and sent me a big cargo-boat to carry the furniture.

The boat arrived late one evening—too late to do anything that night; but the mere sight of it acted as a cure on me, and next morning I was up at five, packing and superintending servants, boatmen, and police, who all helped willingly, but without much judgment. I never worked so hard in my life as I did that day. I was fifteen hours without sitting down, and almost without food, for I dared not let the men do anything without showing them how. They were terrible fellows for making a mistake whenever possible. Having made them take the mosquito-house, beds, etc., to pieces properly, I had turned

both the piano and its bearers reached the house in safety.

There was still much to be done before rest could be thought of that day; the Government safe had to be secured by chains passed through holes sawn in the floor, a bed had to be put together for me and completely prepared before the rising of the mosquitoes at sunset (otherwise it was in vain to hope that the curtain would be free from them), and various other things had to be unpacked and made available for cooking and serving up something to eat. At last all was done, and at about eight o'clock I dismissed the police and boatmen, with the exception of the two policemen on guard, and had my large, new empty house all to myself.

From that day my health improved in a surprising manner. The situation of the new house was lovely, and extremely

healthy. It was built on a spur of the hill of Jugra, the river winding about below, disappearing and reappearing through the trees, and the hill itself sloping away above the house at the back. We had, months before, begun to make a garden, and one of my constant employments was helping the gardener—for we were now allowed a gardener by Government—by my criticisms to make a really flat lawn for lawn-tennis. I used to stoop down with my eyes on a level with the plateau which was being formed on the side of the hill, and suggest that there was too much earth here and too little there, until at last I got it to my satisfaction. On Mr. Innes's next visit he was delighted to find how much the house and garden had progressed since my taking up my abode at the hill. Not long after that, the Resident returned to Klang, and consequently Mr. Innes was able to resume his own post at Langat.

CHAPTER IX.

FLOWERS AND INSECTS.

ROM this time till our next visit to Singapore was the most halcyon period of our whole stay in the Native States. We were delighted with our new house and surroundings. The house was made of boards overlapping each other, after the fashion called weatherboarding, and to our great delight we were allowed three coats of white paint throughout the whole house. We were much surprised at the unwonted liberality shown in the matter of paint on this occasion ; but afterwards we understood the

reason. The paint made the house look cheerful and civilized, especially at night, when it reflected and repeated the light of the lamps, instead of absorbing it, as the dark palm-leaf walls of the wigwam at the Bandar had done.

We soon had a path cleared by the police from the bungalow to half-way up the hill, and on the days when we did not play lawn-tennis we often climbed up as far as the 'Folly'—a ruined shed standing on the next spur of the hill above ours. This house had never been lived in, for the same reason that had bestowed its name on it—namely, an absolute want of water. The site had been chosen for its lovely and wide-reaching view of the sea, which lay below, spread out like a panorama; and the kitchen was actually finished before the enterprising projector discovered that every drop of water would have had to be carried

up from our spur, the only path from which was almost as steep as the side of a house. This was not to be thought of in a country where so much water was required for bathing purposes; the site was therefore abandoned. There was no view of the sea from our house.

We also before long had a path cleared the whole way up the hill, and when we felt particularly energetic used to climb to the top. There was not much to be seen when you got there, for the whole surrounding country, upon which you looked down as on a map, consisted of mangrove swamps intersected by streams. On one side there would have been a view of the sea, had the trees not been too thick to admit it. After we had rested a little, which rest was generally cut short by the attentions of the mosquitoes, we came straight down again. We were obliged to come down by the same

path, as the jungle was too thick to allow of our walking anywhere unless the police had previously cleared the way with their axes and parangs.

The enjoyment, to me, of this jungle walk lay in the wonderful variety of vegetation, of strange forms and stranger colouring, that was to be seen on all sides. At first I remember I was disposed to deprecate it, comparing it with the magnificent primeval jungle of the hill of Matang in Sarawak, than which I believe there is no more beautiful spot in the world; but after a time, when I had to a certain extent forgotten Matang, I found a walk in the Jugra jungle very interesting. There were not many actual flowers to be seen in it, a pale and shabby variety of the ixora being the only one, except a few small greenish-white blossoms of various kinds, and a very curious flower called by

the natives the *tepus*, pronounced t'puss. This last may possibly be well known to botanists; but as I cannot find the word in any Malay dictionary, and therefore cannot learn its botanical name, I must try to describe it as well as I can. The t'puss plant is a cane, growing from eight to twelve feet high; there is nothing peculiar about the cane itself, but if natives are to be believed, its way of growing its flowers is very peculiar. As you walk through the grove of canes, you notice many brilliant scarlet star-like flowers lying on the ground. You naturally think they are blossoms dropped from some high tree, and look up to see if you can discern more overhead; but to your surprise you find there are no trees within a hundred yards. You then try to pick up the beautiful blossom to examine it, and discover that it is growing out of the ground like a fungus,

without any leaves. You dig for its root, but only succeed in getting down to an interminable thick, tough runner; this the natives say connects the flower with the cane, being in fact the stalk of the flower, which, instead of conducting itself like an ordinary flower-stalk, runs underground for several yards.

I never had an opportunity of verifying this statement; I should have liked to dig up both cane and flower, and see for myself that the one belonged to the other; but there were several obstacles in the way. I never had anything bigger than a trowel with me, whereas to dig out and follow up one root or runner among hundreds for several yards, and at the depth of two feet, would have been as serious a task almost as digging a grave; and then, too, I always had an impression that while I was studying the habits of the t'puss, some tiger

might perhaps be quietly studying my habits from a little distance, and might take the opportunity of my apparent absorption to creep up behind me.

I do not think, however, even if the runner does grow out of the cane, it necessarily follows that the scarlet flower is the proper blossom of the cane ; for this reason, that I one day came upon a cane, to all appearance a t'puss, higher up on the hill and in a more sunny situation, with quite another sort of flower, growing in the usual manner on it. Tropical plants have such odd ways that it is never safe to say with regard to any story you may hear about them, 'That must be impossible ;' still I should think it unlikely even in the tropics that a plant can have two kinds of flowers, one a cluster of white and yellow growing on the stem, and another a single scarlet flower lying afar off on the ground, dis-

owned as it were by the plant. I incline to think, in short, that the latter is in reality a sort of flower-fungus, a parasite and not an integral part of the plant t'puss. It is in appearance not unlike a sea-anemone, having from five to eight scarlet tube-like petals, with yellow stamens; it is fleshy and juicy, and withers very soon if gathered, but if put into water every morning a new set of petals comes out to replace the withered ones, though each day the fresh petals are fewer in number and smaller in size. It is of no use to try to plant it in the earth, as it dies at once. I wish the next botanist who goes to Langat would find out all about it, and tell me.

Our garden-flowers were more numerous than those in the jungle. We soon collected around us roses, sunflowers, cocks-combs, everlasting, tuberoses, balsams, and pomegranates; to these were afterwards

added the gardenia, hibiscus or shoe-flower, several kinds of large lilies (white and coloured), honeysuckle, bunga milor (a kind of small white jessamine), bunga tongking and moon-flower. The two last are creepers, both interesting in their different ways. The bunga tongking has an insignificant little flower of a greenish-yellow, but with a very sweet perfume; the moon-flower is pretty to watch when its flowers are opening. The plant is covered with long green buds in the daytime, and there is not an open flower to be seen, last night's blossoms having faded and dropped off. As soon as the sun goes down the buds begin to open, and in a quarter of an hour the plant, from a sheet of pure green, has become a sheet of pure white. There is a fascination in watching this transformation scene; it is like the illumination of the dome of St. Peter's, only far more beauti-

ful. When you see a bud begin to move you may count ten, and by the ten it will have become a perfectly open flower, quite gradually, and without the smallest jerk. I have seen young men and maidens leave their lawn tennis, in Singapore, to stand round the moon-flower and bet which would be the next bud to open.

It has been said that 'in the tropics, the fruits have no taste, the flowers have no scent, and the birds no song.' There is a good deal of truth in this somewhat bitter and sweeping accusation. Of the flowers just mentioned, the bunga tongking, tube-rose, bunga milor, and gardenia, were the only scented ones. The roses, such as they were, flowered all the year round, but were tiny and had no scent. Mignonette and heliotrope can also be got to flower freely in Malaya, but without scent. Stephanotis is a common flower in Singapore gardens,

and has all its own delicious perfume, but I never succeeded in getting a plant for my garden at Langat. Several young champaka trees, however, were given me by the Sultan, and though still too young to flower when I left, were doing very well, and I trust are benefiting our successors by their sweet blossoms.

As to all the fruits having no taste, I do not quite agree; it seemed to me that they either had none at all, or else a very strong one. In our new garden there were already many fruit trees, which Mr. Innes bought at high prices from the natives, who had, or said they had, planted them. There were bananas of many varieties, the pinang or betel-nut, limes, and jumbus, to which we added pomegranates (much esteemed by the natives), custard-apples, and mangosteens. We did not stay long enough to see the fruits of the last three kinds, but

the pomegranates were nearly always in fruit all the year round, and we constantly gave them away to natives, not caring for them ourselves. We gave away also for the same reason the champada, or jack-fruit, which, from its colour and smell, always reminded me of a tin of railway-butter; the ambachang, or horse-mango, a compound of string and turpentine; and the soursop, which is like cotton-wool steeped in sugar and water, with the juice of two or three green gooseberries to flavour it. Some of the Malay fruits, we thought, were so far from nice raw, that they must be intended by nature to be cooked: and we tried to cook them, especially the jumbu ayer, a sort of tasteless little apple; but our efforts were not successful. I still think, however, that nature intended them to be cooked—but not by us.

The 'king of fruits'—the durian—was

not represented in our garden; but we were always plentifully supplied with it, when in season, by the Sultan and by other people. We had made a strict rule that we would accept nothing from natives except fruit or flowers. Fruit was never sold in Langat, and had no price; therefore the present of a few bananas or durian from the grower's own garden could hardly be considered of any intrinsic value. Nevertheless, if the giver were poor, we used generally to make a return in the shape of a pound or two of coffee, or a bundle of cigars.

It was necessary to guard against the appearance of accepting even the smallest present without a *quid pro quo*, as the natural inclination of both Malays and Chinese when they had a case pending in court was to think they could 'square' the magistrate and secure a favourable judgment for themselves by making him a present of eggs,

fowls, ducks, or bottles of brandy. We had a great deal of difficulty in getting them to understand our refusing these presents. They would ask, in a frightened and humble manner, ‘Have I committed any crime, that the Tuan will not accept my offering?’

After it had been explained to them that it was contrary to English etiquette for a magistrate to accept presents from litigants, they would nevertheless squat for hours on the Court-room floor with their bundles of live fowls, whose gasping beaks and rolling eyes testified to the discomfort of having been carried head-downward in the sun for many miles. When ordered off from the Court-room, the men generally slunk round to the back-door and offered the bribe to me; and on being sent away with a scolding by me, some of them were so incorrigible that they went to the kitchen and gave

their fowls to the servants. When this came to our knowledge, we strictly forbade the servants to take any presents, which seemed to amaze them much. They told us they had not wanted to take the things, and had only done so out of a feeling that some one belonging to the house was bound to do it, as it was putting an insult on any Malay to refuse his gift. The men had urged that if they were to be seen returning to their homes with their fowls still in their hands it would injure their reputation, as everyone would say, 'Lo! these men are out of favour, and thought to be very bad characters by the Tuan magistrate; he will not accept anything from them.'

The two or three well-to-do Chinamen in Langat, namely, the gambling, spirit and opium farmers, were just as bad at first as the Malays. The three farms—a considerable source of revenue to the Government—

were put up to auction every year ; and each competitor was convinced that his chance of success would be in proportion to the number of geese or bottles of brandy which he sent to the Tuan previously. They gave up this practice, however, sooner than the Malays, as, having more common sense, and being quicker at taking in new ideas, they sooner discovered how offensive it was to the Tuan.

The saying about the birds having no song is literally true. There was not one in Langat that had a continuous song, like those of our nightingale, lark, thrush, linnet, blackbird, etc. They generally had only three, four, or five notes, which they sang over and over again with a wearisome iteration, reminding one of a set of school-girls practising. It is a curious fact—let evolutionists account for it if they can—that the best songbirds are never to be

found in sparsely populated countries. It almost seems as if the birds go into the wilds to practise their scales and songs, and when they have become perfect emerge from their seclusion and fly to seek an appreciative human audience. It were much to be wished that schoolgirls and other imperfect performers would follow their example.

Perhaps the real explanation is that our climate is more favourable than a tropical one for developing a bird's voice; or perhaps the fact is not due to natural causes at all, but to the constant importation by human agency of songbirds to cities and populous countries.

We were introduced to quite a new set of insects by our removal to the hill. There had been plenty at the Bandar, but there were many more at the hill. First and foremost of these latter were the white

ants, of which there had not been one at the Bandar, they having the good taste to dislike swamps. Then there were the kumbangs, large dark beetles about the size of a humming-bird, which never seemed to see where they were going, but came banging themselves with a loud boom-m-m into everyone's face in turn. These were fearful, awe-inspiring monsters until you knew them, and found out they were perfectly harmless. Then there were hornets an inch long, with infinitesimal waists and vicious-looking antennæ. Three stings from one of these, it is said, will kill a man ; but, fortunately, they never sting if they can possibly help it, that is to say, never unless they are trodden on or pinched. I was not once stung by them, though the ground below our house was honeycombed with their holes, and though I waged constant war against them and their clay nests,

which they plastered on the walls, punkah, tables, chairs, and everywhere where they thought they would be undisturbed. These nests were very curious when one examined them. A fully completed one was a long caterpillar-shaped mass of clay, subdivided into cells, which were full of white grubs (the future hornets), except two or three of the end ones. These last were filled with live spiders, evidently intended as the food of the young hornets as soon as they should become alive.

Then there was the praying insect, or 'lady,' as it is called in Sarawak. I think the latter name the better of the two. Some varieties were uncommonly like a lady of the present time, their bodies being very like the bodice of a gown, and their wings forming the skirt; while they flourished their long arms about in an affected manner that was like a caricature of some

of their human namesakes. It is the exception to find any insect in the tropics that cannot both bite and fly. Even earwigs have wings, and I do not know whether spiders have; but if not, they fly by means of their webs. A spider flew on my hand and bit it one day. There was no tree or ceiling near from which it could have dropped.

Red ants, black ants, some an inch long, some almost invisible, and ants of every intervening size, had to be swept away daily for fear of their effecting a lodgment in the house. I once found a nest of tiny ants in a very curious place, namely, a jewel-case of morocco and velvet, which was at the bottom of one of my trunks. I only discovered it by noticing a string of ants crossing the floor with eggs in their mouths. Following them up, I unlocked the trunk, dived into it, and fished out the jewel-case,

which was swarming with ants and eggs. But the places where these little wretches were most troublesome were in my larder and storeroom. We had a zinc safe for our larder, the legs of which, standing in four bowls of water, in a place where people frequently passed, could be kept pretty free with constant attention; but in the storeroom, which I kept locked up and did not require to visit every day, the ants were a perfect nuisance. The only way to keep sugar, or sweet things, or ghee from them was to isolate the vessel containing it on a stand, which stand must be placed in a large bowl of kerosene oil, or mixed water and kerosene. Even this plan did not answer for long, as a prismatic film soon formed on the surface of the moat, and the ants walked merrily across to their prey by thousands. Oh, the trouble I have had to get them out of my crocks of sugar,

white and brown!—yet it had to be done, otherwise we should have been obliged to go without sugar for a month or more, until the steamer had gone from Klang to Singapore and back. White sugar was not to be had in Langat for love or money; and the brown sold in the bazaar was composed of ants and sugar in about equal proportions, the Chinese not being sensitive on this point. You hear even some Englishmen say, ‘What do a few ants signify? you don’t taste them, and they are very useful little creatures as scavengers; you ought to feel grateful to them!’ But I am inclined to deny that the parallel holds good; for the ants ‘scavenge’ all the best and most expensive eatables they can find. Were human beings to imitate them they would be called not scavengers, but thieves; besides, however grateful and admiring one may feel towards a human

scavenger, one does not care to eat his dead body, boiled or baked, in every dish that comes to table.

The plague of ants, like most of the other insect plagues of the East, can be greatly mitigated by an active Chinese 'boy,' who is much given to sweeping and dusting; as the ants, like the English spiders, become discouraged in time if they find each day's work is destroyed on the morrow.

The bringing in of candles or lamps in the evening was the signal for the appearance of hundreds of insects of all shapes and sizes, that flew in at the open doorways, of which there were six or eight to each room. Carpenter beetles buzzed into our soup, locusts whirred into our tumblers, hornets entangled themselves in our hair, while crowds of unknown species lay about the table, more or less singed by the visits

they had first paid to the candles. Meantime lizards darted, chirruped and caught moths on the ceiling, every now and then falling with a thud on the table. The fall generally broke their tails off short, but after a moment's pause of astonishment they would wriggle away, leaving, unlike Boopep's celebrated flock, their tails behind them.

Frogs and snakes sometimes hopped and glided along the verandas, but never did us any harm. Scorpions ran about with tails erect below the house, or hid under boxes that had not been moved for some days, but I was never stung by them.

Wonderful animals were constantly brought to our door by the natives, who had caught them in the jungle and hoped we would accept them; but as they could never tell us how to feed these creatures, and we did not wish them to starve to

death before our eyes, we declined them ; otherwise we should have liked to send them to Singapore in the steamer as a present to the Zoological Gardens there. Alligators were brought in such quantities at one time that it almost seemed as if the natives must breed them, in order to claim the Government reward for killing them ; so Mr. Innes made a point, after paying the reward, of seeing the wretched animal knocked on the head, lest it should be taken away, tethered near a pond, and brought up again on a future occasion.

One consequence of our moving to the hill was that we saw rather less of the Resident, the great attraction of Langat to him being the snipe at the Bandar. We did not much regret this, as, to tell the truth, we had by this time begun to acknowledge to ourselves that, notwithstanding the dull stagnation of Langat,

which would almost have made one's worst enemy welcome, the visits of the Resident and his satellites were an unmitigated nuisance. The only result of them, to us, was a pair of bad headaches each time, and an increase in our monthly bills which bade fair to bring us into money difficulties before long.

The Resident was an old sailor, and very proud of the fact—though what there was to be proud of in his career, as sketched for us by those who professed to know all about it, was a mystery. However, I suppose it was in memory of his nautical days that he generally pitched his voice in tones that would have done admirably well for giving orders during a storm at sea, and trying to drown the roar of the elements. From the moment he came into the house until the moment he left it, he never stopped shouting. Even from the very bath-room, shouts

of ‘Innes!’ ‘INNES!’ ‘INNES!’ would be heard between the splashes of water, and it was of no use for Mr. Innes to pretend not to hear, as everyone knew these palm-leaf houses were well adapted for carrying sound. A whisper uttered in one room could, unless other noises were going on, be heard all over the house. The shouts from the bath-room were generally the prelude to some anecdote, of which all the world within hearing had the benefit.

We could have forgiven the old Resident’s noise and the expense to which he put us—and many far more serious objections we had to him, on which I will not here enlarge—if only he would have taken care to bring us our letters, parcels, stores and clothes from the wash, whenever possible. His neglect of us in these respects left us heartsick and indignant. During the half-hour that followed one of his visits,

while the headache caused by the noise and bustle still lasted, and while we realized that for another indefinite period we were left without food (except rice and salt fish), without clothes (except rough-dried ones), and without books, we accused him of utter selfishness, of want of proper human sympathy for his fellow-man, of taking a mean advantage of his position, and of all manner of unamiable qualities. These feelings made it the more easy for us to take a step which we had long been meditating. This was to ask for a 'hospitality allowance' from the Government. We had only refrained from doing so because we felt it would not be agreeable to the Resident, who was by far our most frequent visitor; but at length our irritation at his conduct got the better of us, and Mr. Innes seized the occasion of the Viceroy Tunku Dia Udin's offering a second visit to apply

for an allowance. It was not an unreasonable request, as all the higher officials in the service had already something of the kind. I am not sure whether at that time the Resident himself had one, but he had a travelling allowance of so many dollars per day when absent from Klang, as also had his son-in-law, and the Klang treasurer and other subordinate officials.

The Resident disapproved of Mr. Innes's application. He told us the next time he came that he was 'surprised at our wishing to make an hotel of our house.' This was really too good, for that was exactly what we felt our house had been during the past eighteen months; an hotel in all except the fact of the landlord's paying his own bills. As Mr. Innes would not be persuaded to withdraw his application, the Resident agreed to forward it to headquarters. It was granted at once,

and we were amused to find that the result was just what we had expected and wished : as soon as the money was to come no longer out of the collector's slender salary, but to figure among the weekly expenses incurred by the Government officials at Klang, the Resident began to think twice about coming to Langat for snipe-shooting, and when he came, brought far fewer attendants. The Government was, in reality, far better able to afford the expense than we ; but we rejoiced at the change, and did not trouble ourselves about the inconsistency of it.

To do the Resident only bare justice, he was very hospitable himself, and constantly invited us to go and stay with him and his wife and family at Klang. We went sometimes, but the result was to make us feel that the less the two families saw of each other, the more likely they were to

remain friends; so that we rather avoided being drawn into a closer acquaintance.

I do not mean to say that there was at this time a quarrel, or even a coolness, between us and the Resident. I only mean that we were afraid if we became very intimate with him and his there might be. Each party was aware of the necessity, in an isolated jungle, of keeping on good terms with the only other English family in the country. So we kept up appearances. It was no doubt rather trying, when Mr. Innes expected to get his two hundred dollars at the end of the month, and had calculated on them to pay certain bills, to find that a cask of Australian wine or a gun, which he had not ordered and did not want, was sent to him in error in lieu of part of the money; it was also trying when, after having longed for newspapers daily for a whole month, scraps of

our own *Punches*, or *Saturday Reviews*, were handed us, with the facetious remark that the alligators were reading the rest, which had flown overboard into the river while our friends were 'taking forty winks' in the steam-launch. It was a bore when our whole mail of letters and newspapers, having been entrusted by the postmaster of Singapore to the Resident for transmission, was left by him in a bedroom at Government House, Singapore, and never delivered.

But these and many other disagreeables had to be put up with, and were put up with, though they naturally did not tend to cement friendship.

Mr. Innes in later days tried to make both the Sultan's and his own grievances known to the Governor in Singapore, but found that the necessity of sending them through the person complained of, stulti-

fied them all. The Resident, on reading the letters, used to come up to Langat in his steam-launch, and tell Mr. Innes, with every mark of ill-humour, that he might send them if he pleased ; but there was one little preliminary which should be gone through first—that was, resignation of the service. ‘I shall not forward that letter, sir, unless by the same mail I forward your resignation,’ he declared on one occasion !

The letter in question was merely a request to Government to be allowed a small steam-launch, and Mr. Innes was quite amazed at the opposition it evoked in the Resident. This question of a steam-launch for Langat had always been a sore point with us. Our predecessor, as I have before mentioned, had been allowed one almost solely for his own use, the first Resident of Selangor, Mr. Davidson, being, I

think, rightly of opinion that the European stationed at Langat was more in need of such a means of conveyance than the Resident at Klang. There were several steamers trading constantly to and from Klang, whereas for many years no steamer came to Langat at all ; and at last, when a little one did undertake to come, she was so irregular that she was worse than useless.

Again, the duties of the Resident of Selangor obliged him, or ought to have obliged him, to remain constantly in Klang, administering justice, and always accessible to natives ; while the duties of the collector and magistrate at Langat necessitated continual trips along the coast and up the rivers to inquire into murders on the spot, or to make personal inspection of police-stations and of fishing-stakes, tin-mines, and other sources of revenue. These trips, especially in cases of murder, were often

rendered futile for want of a steam-launch ; a surprise visit was impossible when the only boat to be had was a four-oared gig, easily outstripped by the native canoes, or circumvented by a fleet 'batang-walker,' the latter cutting across a promontory by a jungle-path, while the boat coasted round it. But none of these arguments had any weight with our superior. He professed constantly that he thought Langat should have a steam-launch, but whenever it seemed likely that the Government would allow us one, he invariably discovered some objection to the plan. It became at last quite evident, from expressions which he let fall, that he was jealous of anyone's having a steam-launch but himself, wishing to make it a distinctive adjunct to the position of Resident.

Mr. Innes could not in the least see why he ought to resign before asking for a steam-launch, especially as he had often re-

ceived promises of one; but he saw very plainly that to persist in doing anything whatever against the Resident's wishes would end in an absolute quarrel, in which he must inevitably go to the wall, and so was compelled to drop the matter for a time.

END OF VOL. I.

